



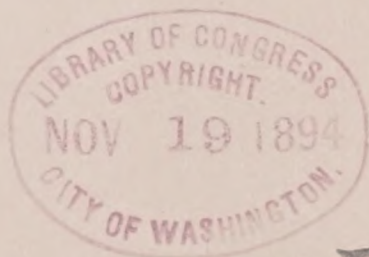


BEYOND THE VEIL

FOR NOW WE SEE IN A MIRROR, DARKLY ; BUT THEN
FACE TO FACE : NOW I KNOW IN PART ; BUT
THEN SHALL I KNOW EVEN AS
ALSO I AM KNOWN

ms BY
G. B. WILLCOX

AUTHOR OF "THE PRODIGAL SON, A MONOGRAPH,"
AND "THE PASTOR AMIDST HIS FLOCK"



539622'

NEW YORK : ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH &
COMPANY (INC.), 182 FIFTH AVENUE

PZ3
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PRESS OF
E. O. JENKINS' SON,
NEW YORK.

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TO

M. J. W

NOTE.

THE Eternal Home, in the author's opinion, has been too much regarded as a sort of celestial monastery, in which two or three occupations, culled from the whole range of our earthly life, have been supposed to be those, exclusively, of the redeemed. This limited view has descended to us from mediæval times, in which certain rounds of religious service were regarded as endowed with a special sanctity.

“Beyond the Veil” is an attempt to convey a view of the celestial life in which occupations “secular” as well as “religious” are all alike pervaded and inspired by the love to God and His creatures which exalts the society above.

BEYOND THE VEIL.

I.

JUNE 10, 1880.

I mean to begin a diary. I don't suppose that any one, however secret he meant to keep such a thing, was ever thoroughly candid in disclosing his inner life. But I purpose to be at least nearly so, and then to lock up the document. It will be interesting reading for me by and by. Belle Stickney, they say, intends to come out at the head of the class and get the gold medal. I intend she shall not. She is an awful plodder, but learns slowly. I can get a lesson in half her time. She is bright in spots, like her tulle with its spangles. She rendered finely in Cæsar the other day, and had some good things in her essay; but, on the whole, I don't see that she is much above average. If she is to lead us all, she will have to shoot straight up like a rocket from her present level.

JUNE 13.

Half a dozen of us girls are invited to Susie Winthrop's party next Tuesday. Belle will out-

shine us all, I hear, in her new blue silk, and the solitaire diamond in her engagement-ring. She may have fine clothes, with her father's long purse; but, as sure as my name is Alice, she shows a sad poverty of taste. *That* is a thing that money won't buy. I hear that when her mother was in Sherman's lately, and told him she wanted a picture, he asked her in what style of art? Upon which she plumed herself, and replied, "The latest style, of course! Do you suppose I want old fashions?" Belle measures the value of a thing by the flash and glare of its colors. I should expect her to rate a tune by the noise it made.

JUNE 15.

As I look over these two entries I am ashamed of their crusty spirit. But I set out to be honest—to put down not what I ought to feel, but what I do feel. Perhaps it will work like a stethoscope, to tell me how the heart is acting, and so help me to improve. I don't pretend to like Belle. If I am not amiable, I am at least no hypocrite.

JUNE 16.

What a miserable, sneaking comfort I was attempting to find in those last words! How much worse that petty jealousy looks, when precipitated here, in black and white, than when held in solu-

tion within me! See here, Alice Herbert! I'm going to take you in hand. The next time I catch you sneering at anybody, in your thought, in this style, I mean to put a pen in your hand, and take you by the wrist, and *make* you set it down here, in plain English, for your jaundiced eyes to study, till you are as thoroughly ashamed of yourself as you ought to be. You shall discover what vermin of envy and malice infest the closets and corners of your inner life, while you are patting yourself complacently as rather a model character. You shall see yourself, not as in an old, Greek, tarnished "mirror, darkly," but as in a modern, bevel-edged, plate-glass article, "face to face." So there!

JUNE 18.

And now you have been at it again, Miss Alice! You tried to capture Harry Ellinger at the party. You thought you could charm him with some of the bright things you had planned beforehand to say. But you found him turning his eyes abstractedly off toward Belle, did you? And your thought was a stream of gall. "Hateful thing! Bedizened with jewelry! It's *that* he is admiring! What does he care for *her*? How long will it last? See her simpering to draw him! Well, if he can't see through her, little *I* care for him! If I thought there wasn't more of me than there

is of her—" How does it look, Alice Herbert, as you have it here ?

JUNE 19.

Dr. Bentley announced, last Sunday, that there were signs of a revival, and he and the deacons called a meeting of the church. They want to employ an evangelist. I don't see much sign of "the refreshing," as he called it, among the girls. But, if it comes, it will be something new. I suppose we shall all have to go. It would delight mother to see me a better girl.

JUNE 27.

Rev. Mr. Newman has come and commenced his work. I don't know much of evangelists. Perhaps he is not like the rest. But he has a business-like way of proceeding, as if he felt himself fully master of the situation, that I do not altogether like. One thing I *do* like is that he knows no rich, no poor. We are, to him, all alike *souls* to be saved or lost. In the inquiry-room he pays no more attention to seal-skins than to thread-bare shawls. In his looks he is just a love of a man, and the girls are all charmed with him. In speaking, he can play on one's feelings as I do on the keys of my piano, and draw out any response he wants. He seems to know how to move us as a mass. I find this material sympathy already

taking hold of me. Our girls are beginning to go to every meeting, and the boys wait round the doors to escort us home. There has been such a pressure for a recess in the school, that Miss Thurston has given way, in part, and for the present will keep only in the forenoons. She is awfully nice about it.

JUNE 29.

The meetings pack the old church, aisles, galleries, and all. The singing, by the whole congregation, lifts one as on great wings. It is just lovely! Nothing is talked about in the streets, the stores, the postoffice, everywhere, but the revival. I have never seen the town so moved before. It breaks up the dull round of our life. I am not sure but it strikes into us, and subsoils, as the farmers say, more deeply than other events. Anyway, it seems to be having that effect on me. I have been with the girls in an inquiry-meeting two or three times, and think it does me good.

JULY 1.

A dozen or more from our school think of joining our church, and I think I should like to go with them. But, much to my surprise, papa and mamma object. They think I had better wait and think it over. I can't see why. I'm sure I am honest and sincere. The girls think they will be

all in white when they join, with blue sashes, and it would be lovely to be among them. I don't want to sit off one side and look on. I believe I shall not go, that day, at all.

JULY 10.

Mr. Newman left a week ago. The revival tide has begun to ebb. I'm already half in doubt whether papa and mamma were not right in opposing me. I'm afraid they knew me better than I knew myself. I thought the depths in me were stirred. Was it more than ripples? I don't seem to be any readier to sacrifice myself for an unselfish end than I was before. Some of the girls are perhaps more in earnest than I. But to some of them, I'm afraid, it was a matter of sighs and tears, and then of glorification. The whole affair brings a gloomy feeling over me. The solemn warning, "the last state of that man was worse than the first," keeps echoing within. Have I *grounded at high tide*? and will no new flood ever float me off again? Anyway, I seem to be in no condition to return to the subject now. But I'm glad I did not join the church.

II.

MAY 28, 1884.

It is nearly four years since I touched my diary ! I find it here, under lock and key—a strange confession of heart-secrets—of what seems now an age ago. In these four years I have passed out of girlhood. Here is a *carte-de-visite* of myself, taken at about the date of this last entry. How green it looks ! Is it possible that that pudding-face can ever have been mine ? And the diary is much such a photograph of an inner life, as I suppose I must acknowledge to have been mine. I should be ashamed not to believe that I have a personality now, which inspheres that, with a liberal margin on every side. Indeed, I trust it has dissolved that old nucleus and raised its quality by the larger infusion.

MAY 30.

Dr. Bentley's parsonage is somewhat like one of his discourses—long, dry, rather rambling in structure, with no end of divisions, rather grim than cheery, decidedly antiquated and standing some-

what remote from the travelled highway. I went over there, this afternoon, to see when Mrs. Bentley can release Polly Meekam, and found I was the silly fly that had walked into the spider's parlor. For the old Doctor was lying in wait for me. It was just my luck that he should come himself to the door. Of course, in dismay, I made him understand that I had come to see Mrs. Bentley—but I was too late. He would call her soon, but wanted first, if it would be agreeable, etc., etc., to have a little religious conversation. Upon which he ushered me into the sitting-room, pointed me to a seat on the sofa, planted a chair before me, with his spectacles up on his forehead, and began with unction, his inquisitorial torture. I had just been at Doctor Liscomb's dental rooms to purchase a few dollars' worth of *his* variety of torture, and had a wedge between two teeth in anticipation of another like bargain to-morrow. All this put me in a delightful mood for enjoying the Doctor's infliction. I cannot remember half he said. It was the usual round—as dry and hard as the beat of a mill-horse. While I was squirming on the rack, I looked at the green paper window-shades, and up at Mrs. Bentley's mother's old-framed sampler on the wall; at the high antique secretary, stiff and stern as a grenadier; at the plaster monstrosities, perched for ornament on the

mantel, and tried to resign myself meekly to my fate. I must know I was a sinner, and I must lay down the weapons of my rebellion—between these two lines of exhortation he moved back and forth for a solid hour. I don't know anything about his rebellion. I didn't *tell* him he was a Quixote, discovering a Goliath in a wind-mill, and a host of the enemy in a flock of sheep. I had better manners. But, after I had endured him for about twenty minutes, I let his words slip through from one ear to the other, like water over rocks, and sat and quietly^{*} studied him through the rest of the ordeal. I suppose of course I'm a sinner. It seems as necessary for any poor mortal to be that as to have two eyes and two hands. I would like religion well enough—if I could be sure the purchase would be worth the price. But the Doctor will never convert me.

I said I sat still and endured him. No, I remember now, I bestirred myself in defense. I threw up a rampart of sceptical doubts, for a part of the time, around me. I gave him to understand that he must carry that, by storm or siege, before he would reach the stronghold within. I tramped the outworks and fought him off at every point. The whole battle was transferred from the heart he was attacking to the head that he had supposed already his. I challenged the Bible, immortality,

the existence of God—anything that offered a foothold where to make a stand. I really think the good, old gentleman believed me sincere in it all. Of course I kept on a sober face, and, as I let fly at him one horrid heresy after another, and threw myself into the defense so stoutly, I came to half believe, for the moment, what I was saying. Anyway, I fought him off so heroically that he finally raised the siege, and retreated upstairs to call Mrs. Bentley.

I was a little afraid he would report his discomfiture to her, and that she would take the field with reinforcements. She would have met my reserves if she had, for my will was now well up. But either I was wrong in my apprehension that he had reported me, or she accepted the situation as hopeless. There was no further religious talk. She could release Polly to-morrow, and I came away.

The long walk down their dooryard and home was delightful. The maples and elms and chestnuts had awoke from their winter's sleep and donned their green costumes for the summer festival. Dr. Bentley's magnificent old elm strikes me as a type of the model gentleman—so stiff and sturdy in holding its ground, but so graceful and compliant, yielding to every breeze. The robins made a musical aviary of the branches and foliage,

and the honeysuckle under Mrs. Bentley's window, with the humming-birds foraging around it, breathed its heavy fragrance on me as I went by. I hope Polly will come promptly to-morrow. If she doesn't get mother's gown done soon, there will be no time to have mine in season for Mabel Pollock's party.

III.

JUNE 3.

I was right in supposing Dr. Bentley had reported me to his good wife. He put her into a fidget about me, and she began on me to-day. It was as we were coming from Scoville's grocery, where we met, unluckily, and she stuck to me like a thistle-down. I'm sorry for the good old lady. The girls say she has a horror of Shakspeare, as a writer for theatres. She has worn the same old, black bombazine for five years at least. The venerable garment has gained a unique individuality of its own. I can tell it so far off that I easily infer what wearer is in it. If she were not too honest, I should suspect she had stolen it from some museum of antique costumes. Every word she said as we walked, and I stopped occasionally for a wild flower, reminded me of what they told us at Wellesley of the old Roman idea of religion—"religio, a binding down, a constraint." She wants to head me in, to shrink me and make less of me than there is now. All the breadth and

bloom of my life must shrivel into the primness of a young prude. The sails and banners must be torn off in a tempest of remorse, and I must scud under bare poles for the rest of my life. Pleasant prospect! Better be a great sinner than a great cipher.

“Don’t you see, Alice,” she said, “that you’ve got to be emptied of yourself—to sing out of your heart, ‘Oh to be nothing’? This carnal pride and ambition of yours will be the ruin of you.”

No, I don’t see any such thing. Heaven knows there is little enough of me—though I do think I amount to something—as it is. And I’m not going to dwindle down to the vanishing point. She talked about duty. I *hate* duty! I don’t mean to go into a strait-jacket—unless she drives me crazy. I want my liberty—room for adventure and ambition, space to rise and soar. These trammels of duty are dry and fruitless as a peach-tree in March. The drones along that humdrum way have never a new thought from January to December. I don’t care to lead a canal-horse on a straight line because it is useful. I mean to meander into finer scenery. I suppose Jane Holt is a pattern of Mrs. Bentley’s ideal—afraid to breathe for fear of inhaling some malaria of evil, a machine, turning out manufactured articles called duties, day in and out. I don’t propose to join

the drove into which Mrs. Bentley invites me. Pegasus cannot be yoked to her cart. If I ever go through any such change as Doctor and Mrs. Bentley expect, I must first see myself as the miserable sinner that they think me. What right have they to put me in that herd? Every one else is lauding me as a pattern of all the virtues. Why should not every one else be right? They won't catch this bird at present in their gospel net. I had rather be on the wing than in the church-cage.

JUNE 6.

After I escaped from Mrs. Bentley, the other day, I came home across lots, through the meadow. How much pleasanter such a path is than the turn-pike! I like it for one reason—as it shows so plainly that it was *wanted*. It was laid out not by the authorities, but by the feet that needed it—like many a sweet hymn or poem, born of a heart that must find way in that direction. I presume Mrs. Bentley thought, when I broke away from her, on the plea of haste and a short cut home, that I was going through By-Path Meadow, straight toward Giant Despair. If so, the way to destruction was a charming one. It lies, for some distance, along the brook that wanders about like a lost child, seeking the sea from which it came, and seeming to murmur as not knowing which way to

turn next. Just before I crossed the foot-bridge, I sat down on a rock to watch a thrifty couple of robins at their nest, the wife doing her own work while her spouse gave strict attention to business, providing for the family. They seemed to have arrived late from the South and to have not been long at housekeeping. Altogether it was a delightful walk. The air was an aromatic bath and every sight and sound had its separate charm.

But, before I reached home, my halcyon mood was pretty thoroughly broken up. I fell in with Susie Wickham, who told me of Deacon Harrow's docking the salaries of both his clerks, because, he said, there were lots of young men out of employment, and the supply of labor was greater than the demand. He calls that doing business on business principles—not denying that the *work* of the clerks is worth as much to him as it was before. I call it the business of the tiger in the jungle or the shark in the sea. Doubtless the deacon is good in spots—or perhaps, in charity, I ought to say, bad in spots. Probably Mrs. Bentley would say this particular meanness is a fly in the ointment. I should call it a spider or a scorpion. She'd better see to him before besetting me. If he is a saint and I a sinner, would it hurt the town were the tribe of sinners to increase? No one ever accused me of looking on a wage-worker

as a cider-press might be imagined to look on an apple.

I had scarcely parted from Susie at her father's gate, when I encountered Deacon Harrow himself. Susie said he had cut down the salaries only this morning, so I could safely assume ignorance of it. He came toward me in his stiff, nervous way, with the grace of a last year's mullein-stalk bobbing in the wind. His peremptory black eyes—I can hardly tell whether they express a present imperiousness or the aggregate of former years of it—rouse in me some defiance. So, between this and the news I had just heard about him, I was decidedly in a state of mind.

"G-good evening, Miss Herbert," he said, with a somewhat paternal air. "I'm g-glad I met you. I understand th-that the Adams fam-family are in straits. And, as several of them are g-girls, I was hoping the young ladies of the S-sewing society could d-do something for them."

"Yes," I answered blandly, "I trust we shall be able to help them. One of them told me her pay, at Miner & Sheldon's, had been reduced. She could hardly live on it before. I believe those men would squeeze out her life-blood to increase their profits. The unemployed must certainly have help."

The Deacon was silent.

“It is *such* a privilege,” I went on, “that you business gentlemen have, to show your sympathy for those in your employ.”

The Deacon hitched his position from one leg to the other, and stammered :

“Y-yes. J-just so.”

“I am glad,” I continued, pitilessly, “that there is so good a man among the officers of our church ; who exemplifies this tender interest to those in his service, and obeys the Scripture, ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens.’ I don’t mean to flatter you, but it must afford you great pleasure, does it not ? I sometimes wish I were in your place.”

It was as good as a play, to see the old man writhe. He could endure it no longer, but, suddenly remembering an errand, and bidding me good-evening, hurried away. As I watched his figure vanishing in the shadows, I fell to querying whether he suspected that I knew more than I acknowledged, and then, how many Christians like him it would take to make one such ‘light of the world’ as Christ expected a follower of His to be. About as many as it would of fireflies to equal an electric burner.

Yet the Deacon has his better qualities. Out of his store he is sympathetic and kind. He gives away a good deal of money—though, I am told, by the hardest. He is a pillar in the church. He

has considerable public spirit. Sometime or other he may straighten out his distortions and become a model character. But he must work on himself a long while, before he will make much impression on me. If Dr. Bentley should ever have his wish in regard to me, it would certainly not be in the regulation-way that he has marked out.

IV.

JUNE 7.

Poor Peggy Swift has met a sad misfortune. She broke her ankle yesterday, through a rotten plank on the bridge. And now, though she is the sole dependence of herself and her paralytic mother, she can do no work, the doctor says, for months to come. Yet, while she lies, with her face as bright and serene as the moon sailing out from behind a cloud, she preaches with closed lips the most eloquent sermon on patience I ever heard. Some money must be raised for her, and I must raise it.

JUNE 9.

I have had good success. Peggy's beautiful character, of which everybody knows, deserves the credit of it more than I. By what strange impulse was it that I asked the Saloonist, Semler, to give? I had seen him going into and out of his store, and knew him by sight, but had never spoken to him; and, when I met him in the street, had to introduce myself. Susie Wickham,

who was with me, was astonished at my boldness. I hadn't faith enough in him to expect anything but a rough refusal. In so harsh and stormy atmosphere as that in which such men live, I assumed that he must have grown hard and churlish. But I have done him injustice. He is as courteous a man as I ever met. The explanation, I am told, is in his birth from a fine family. So his roots were in good soil, and his recent life is a sort of rough landslide over them. He was moved almost to tears as I told him of Peggy. He has feelings as soft as a child's. Moreover, he seemed to fear I should take for granted that his business had debased him, and so thought this a good chance to assert his manhood. He pledged me twenty-five dollars!—more than any other subscriber, thus far. I almost fell in love with him! I wonder if these saloon-men are quite as bad, after all, as we are apt to think. A deed like this sets them in a pleasanter light. Could one do it who was altogether bad? Their business seems to us dreadful, no doubt. But the conscience of many a one of them, falling among thieves in his childhood, was wounded and left half dead, and there was no Good Samaritan to revive it. [Others were forced into this because they could find nothing else to do. Perhaps we have dropped our Christian charity in judging them.]

JUNE 11.

My rainbow bubble has collapsed ! I don't know that Semler will refuse to pay his pledge, but whether he does or not will signify little to me. Dr. Bentley may be prejudiced against him, but he has given me *facts* enough on which to make up a judgment for myself. Mrs. Cheseboro went to Semler, heart-broken, to beg him not to sell to her husband, and he brutally turned her out of doors. Mr. Daniels remonstrated with him in behalf of his son, whom Semler is ruining, and was told in reply that his son was a fool, and that he ought to have brought him up to control himself. So on through the dismal list. He must have had only a January thaw when I met him, and it is savage weather in him, none the less. Probably the sympathy he showed, for the moment, was a gush from the humanity that God has implanted deep, even in bad men, to keep them from turning the world into a pandemonium. The credit for it seems to belong rather to Semler's Maker than to Semler. All that the man himself has built with his own work on that foundation, I fear, is abominable.

JUNE 13.

The more I learn, from others as well as Dr. Bentley, about Semler, the worse he appears. He is charged with "treating" the boys gratis, that

they may make good customers; and it chimes so well with his general character that I can easily believe it. His place reminds me of nothing so much as the cave in Victor Hugo's story, and Semler lurks in it as the devil-fish, with his tentacula out, feeling after victims.

But I have learned from him one tremendous lesson. He is a greater preacher than Dr. Bentley. He has given me an idea of *sin*, in these few days, such as I should not have gotten from the Doctor in years. Sin has seemed to me rather a light matter—a wrong sentiment to be corrected, an unfortunate bias, an abnormal growth in human nature. But Semler has shown me that it is deliberate and malignant as a viper, that it is pitiless as death, that it is (no weaker word will answer) a damnable spirit, at work in souls and in society. It makes me shudder to think of it. And so much the more because I am no spectator merely, but a partaker. There are confessions in this very diary that ought to have blistered like molten lava as they came up from within me to the surface. I was a child, babbling in words that meant more than I thought. God help me! I begin to see what tawdry stuff was the purple and saffron robe of virtues I was wearing—a very shirt of Nessus it seems now, that was striking in with its venom to the heart.

JUNE 15.

I had to-day a long talk with Marguerite. She would go farther to affect me than a dozen Deacon Harrows—perhaps I should add, Dr. Bentleys. There is more power in the pathetic tones of her voice than in the articulate words of most men. I have not appreciated her since she came into our service, a few weeks ago. I supposed she was an average German girl, more concerned for her wages and her right to evenings out, than about anything higher or finer. How little I knew her! And what glimpses she has given me into human nature! Her story, in itself, is interesting. I must set it down here before I forget it.

She was, it seems, of patrician blood, though this carried with it very moderate fortune. Her father, a count in Thuringia, no more fairly appreciated his wife than have I this daughter. His coarse and burly nature bruised her sensibilities, even in his pleasantest moods, and his imperious will compelled her to self-sacrifices that were a perpetual crucifixion. With every taste and feeling lacerated, she was finally worn out, and died before her time. Marguerite, though she is modest in betraying the fact, which comes out indirectly, inherited the mother's fineness of spiritual fibre. And the father, without intending, if even knowing it, took her through a like torturing ordeal.

A lumpish young descendant of some old landgrave, who had money, fell in love with her, and her father was as ready to sell her into a marriage that she abhorred as he would have been to barter off a heifer. She couldn't make him understand why she should think of objecting. Though she pleaded tearfully, he had just wit enough to perceive that there were strong roots under this swaying willow, and was angry at what he called her stubbornness. Unable to rise above the mercenary level himself, and supposing her as low-graded, he attempted to coerce her by the threat of expulsion from her home. To his surprise, she took him at his word, and left to earn her own livelihood, as a teacher of music, at Jena. There she met a young student of the university, and, on both sides, it was love at first sight. Though it was years ago, and little of what the world calls happiness resulted, and she has now emerged into an experience with which he could have had little in common, she cannot speak of him without a transfiguration of her fine features. As she attempts to describe him in her broken English, I can think of nothing but a master in music trying to render an exquisite score on an instrument shattered and unstrung.

“O Miss Alice!” she said to-day, “he vas zo goot! He voot die for me! Dere vos not von

zelfish hair in his dear head ! Dose eyes of his—dey did always—always—shwim in love ! And he vos zo—zo—deep ! I did look down into him yoost as I haf in die Switzerland, into von crevasse in die ice, tousand feet deep. O, he did zo vant and—and long to be all tings right and high ! He know not mooch about mine Savior. His fader vos a ateist and neffer tolt him about Yesus and heffen and oder such goot tings. But zomehow I do beleef in mine zoul dat Yesus hat *found* him, and, you know, He zaid, ‘I am die Vay.’ My dear Yohann did do always die fery best he know how. Can *anybody*, Miss Alice, do better as dat ? He vos lots better as me, for in dem days I know not Yesus needer. Yohann did love flowers and birds and moosic and pictures and zomehow dere vos in him a—a—I haf no vort—” ‘A fineness of nature ?’ I suggested. “Yes, tank you, dat is vot I mean. He seem not made of die zame clay mit oder folks. O how I did lof him !—more as mine Gott, I am afraid !”

Then the poor thing broke down in sobs and a freshet of tears that carried me with it. She was kneading when she began, but now turned away, lest the tears should fall into the trough, and sat down with her hands covered with flour.

“But,” she continued, “ven I haf had him for husband only tree year, he took sick. He haf

vorked so hard, dat no rough vind or drop of storm come on me, dat he vos vorn out and hat not strengt of body to stant de zickness. Zo, day by day, he pine away. I hat no fader—he die and leaf no money—no moder, no frent but him and mine poor baby. O how black vos dem days! Yohann say dere *moost* be von Gott, and he try to please Him. But ve bote grope about in die dark. Ve know not vy He let us suffer zo—vy Yohann *moost* be took away from me and mine poor Vinifred ven she zo little. Ve yoost stant by dat great Zea of Eternity and shade our eyes (she suited the action to the word) and look out. But dere vos no light on die oder side. All vos dark as midnight. But mine dear Yohann—he zay—‘If dere is any oder life, if, ven I get dere, I am able to lof you, darling, den sure I *vill*, and vait till you and our little pet come too.’ He zay not mooch more. Die fefer go to his head and he out of his mind. Zome days go by and he breet his last. Zome kind neighbors help about die funeral—and den I all alone in die cold vorlt.

“After a while, dem goot ladies in die Deaconness’ House take care of Vinifred and I teach moosic. Den zomebody zay to me, ‘Go to America. Money plenty dere, goot prices for moosic.’ I get nuf togeder for mine passage, mit Vinifred, come to New York, den up here. But I knows

zo little English, haf zo poor clotes, dat dey all take me for common vorkwoman. Zo I get no moosic scholars. I have to do house-vork for mine lifing.

“But I go to kirche—to church—and die preacher hold up die dear Christ,—O zo goot he doos it!—dat it goes right to mine heart. Den comes anoder dreadful ting. Dear little Vinifred took sick and grew vorse and vorse, and I see she is going like her poor fader. Den someting in me rise right up against Gott. I say, ‘Dis is too mooch! Gott! vy don’t you take zome poor beggar’s brat from de street, dat haf no moder to care for him, and leaf alone mine Vinifred?’ I vos mad at Him. I vood not go to die church. But, von efening, ven die lady I vorked for vos vatching by Vinifred, and I vos out, I happened to go by die church ven a missioner from die East vas talking. And I vent in and heard him tell about die shepherds in his country. He said dey feed dere sheeps and lambs on one zide die river—Tegrees, I tink—” Tigris? I asked. “Yes, dat vos die name. Dey feed die sheeps till die grass on one zide all burnt up mit die zun, and no goot for die flock. Den die shepherd tries to coax dem ofer to die oder zide vare die land is higher, and die springs of vater keeps die grass green and goot. But die poor sheeps is afraid to

go in die vater to vade ofer. He calls and sings to dem, but dey look at him and zay ba-a-a, and vill not stir von foot. Vot you tink he do den? Vy, he make in his robe von big—vot you call it?—pocket, oder bag—mit room for two, tree little lambs. Den he put die lambs in dere, mit room for dere heads to look out, and zo he goes backwards, vading tru die vater. Zo die lambs cry after dere moders. And ven die moders sees dem and hears dem, dey and all die flock goes after dem. Den, on die oder side die shepherd drops die lambs on die grass, and, in dem new fields, die sheeps and lambs all feed togedder. O I cannot tell you, Miss Alice, how dat come home to me! Someding said to me—vos it mine goot angel?—‘Poor soul, don’t you see die Goot Shepherd taking *your* lamb, zo you vill follow to die goot land up yonder? Zee you in how mooch love He is trying to lead you to Himself? Give up your vill to His. Rebel no more.’

“And I did give up. I vent back to mine darling Vinifred, full of, O such peace in mine heart! And ven dat dear child vent home, in die arms of her Zavior, I said, ‘Efen so, Fader, for zo it zeemed goot in dy sight.’ And now, dough I am here alone, no fader, moder, husband, child, I cannot tell—no, not efen in *Sherman* efen, could I tell—vot joy I haf in mine zoul efry day!”

V.

JUNE 17.

Marguerite moved me more deeply even than Semler. I am but a child in these matters. But I believe I am learning by these two object-lessons, one repulsive and the other beautiful, as in a Kindergarten. The Master seems to be teaching me of sin through Semler, and of salvation through Marguerite. I fear Mrs. Bentley would shrug her shoulders at it, as not at all the regular path—this going for instruction to a rum-seller and a servant-girl, instead of to her husband's sermons. She might think me "climbing up some other way." But I certainly see farther into the soul of things than ever I did before. What a miserable pride was that of mine, against being drawn in with common sinners! A pretty figure you made of yourself, as I see you now, Miss Alice! A very leper, clutching up her embroidered skirts to avoid defilement.

And I am learning, too, that what I needed was not mere light in the head, but warmth in the

heart. I see that the faith I want is not more knowledge, but a surrender of the heart and life. And how far will this be from contracting and heading me in, as I imagined! I believe I can take up the words of the Roman officer in Mrs. Bailey's drama of "The Martyr":

"One day and two blest nights, spent in acquiring
Your heavenly lore, so powerful and sublime,
O what an altered creature they have made me!"

How this new principle of life expands and exalts a soul! How inevitably it will make more of me than ever I have dreamed of becoming before! How it broadens one's horizon as he rises! How it will lift my aims above the petty interests that shrank and belittled me! I ought to be, and hope to be, as a poor, starveling orange or fig-tree transplanted from our harsh climate to rich soil in the tropics. I begin to see the beauty, the glory, of an unselfish life. Why have I never discovered it before? What a miserable mole, burrowing in the dark, I was!

And little I dreamed what self-denial is. I thought of it as a retrenchment, a mutilation. Yes—the retrenchment that the excision of a tumor is. The retrenchment of an athlete, training off his weight of adipose, that every ounce in him may be an ounce of strength. The retrenchment

of an air-ship dropping the sand-bags—of a redeemed soul dropping the flesh to soar heaven-ward.

I shall have an object now, with which to draw out and put to service every power with which God has endowed me.

“ Build thy great acts high and higher,
Build them on the conquered sod,
Where thy weakness first fell bleeding,
And thy first prayer rose to God ! ”

I feel like a lark soaring in a spring morning. O Thou Christ of God ! what art Thou not now to me ! What dust, what mist, are all things in comparison with Thee ! I feel Thee insphering me, lifting me, inspiring me to be and do what never was or could be in myself alone. And into what companionship I am called, with the choicest spirits of all the ages, the very élite of the world ! What is “ our best society ” to them ? How grand the honor of a place among them ! I have been existing, hibernating, thus far ; but at last, thank Heaven, I shall begin to live.

JUNE 25.

I am in deep waters. All the delightful experience of these few days has graciously strengthened me for wading through them. Without that strength I verily believe I should have at heart

fallen far before long. I have said nothing in this diary, thus far, I find, about George Vaughn. He seems to me as noble a soul as I ever met. He has immensely reinforced the conviction I have from Marguerite, that pure and lofty character is a reality on earth. And the delicacy of his whole nature, the fineness of his taste, the quickness of his sympathy, and, above all, the earnestness of his Christian aspirations, are what I have seen in no man I have ever met before. I am making a confession in writing this—a confession that I could make to no one but myself. Yet some sort of utterance I *must* find for it. There is a relief in formulating here into words what I could not whisper even to my mother. Tennyson utters my feeling:

“ But for the unquiet heart and brain
A use in measured language lies;
The dull, mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.”

There is a sacredness in this secret that makes me even tremble as I write. I think I must get a Yale lock for my desk.

What right have I to imagine that Geo—Mr. Vaughn—ever thinks of me? Do all the words and looks and tones together, on which I have relied, if precipitated leave the least residuum?

There is a world of meaning behind every expression of mine toward him. How much behind his toward me? Is it mere friendship, or—the slightest ripple over something deeper? Tones and looks are counters, I must remember. They mean less or more, as the parties to the game agree in the outset. But alas! there is no agreement here! I am sure I am not flattered by conceit into my belief that he and I have much in common. I verily think he would find in me something that his nature requires. Am I presuming upon a recognition of this, already, without a trace of outward evidence? Or is there such a thing as a spiritual affinity that reveals itself not to the senses, but only to souls?

And how as to my dear friend Susie? It needs no miraculous discerning of spirits to see *her* interest in him. She is too delicate, not to say diffident, to betray it to any one not keenly on the alert. I could not expect her to even think of divulging it to me. But the look in her eyes, the flood and ebb of color in her face, when he is near,—she can no more hide it than a needle can hide its impulse toward the magnet. But does he reciprocate? That they are not engaged is evident enough. Are they approaching it? Has he given her intimations that are unknown to me? Love has a Freemasonry of its own. It has signs

that the uninitiated never suspect. Am I, in every quick throb of my heart toward him, cruelly wronging her? Am I treacherous to a friend whom I have so much reason to esteem? What would she think, could she read these lines?

To surrender George (I *must* call him so here, though I would not dare, to his face, or to Susie) would seem to me like death. The loss of a great fortune would be nothing to it. For the fortune would be something lying around me. But this love for him has struck in. Its roots are entwined with my heart-strings. To tear it out would take with it a great share of the life within me.

So I wander in a starless night. What is his feeling toward me or toward Susie, whether she, if either of us, first touched a responsive chord in him,—would that I knew! But should I not dread to be told? It is this ignorance, these doubts, that threaten my integrity. If I were sure that he loved Susie, my course would be clear—at whatever cost to me; to say nothing of self-respect, I have conscience enough for that. But the force of motive that would then act solidly is frayed out by this uncertainty, and hardly acts at all.

Could Susie fully respond to the deepest life of George? Might he not feel her love to be “a thing wherein there was some hidden want”?

Ha! How I hear in these questions the whisper of the tempter! And then he comes again, asking if it is really the normal, natural order of things that they two should unite? Would they not have a discovery to make? Could they long be happy? As a friend to both, and leaving myself out of the account, ought I to desire their union?—Miss Alice! how conscientious you are! How considerate and jealous for them! Do you think to hide yourself with this gauze? Master, help me! I am groping through a valley of darkness, on the narrow ridge, with the deep ditch on one side, the quag on the other, and the whispers of the wicked ones in my ears. I have a presentiment that this matter carries with it my whole destiny and all my interests for the future. When and where shall I see the light? I am tempted to wish my conscience had not been so *sensitized* by this Christian experience. Little trouble I should have had then from these scruples! But along that line lie disaster and despair! I thank Thee, Master, that, as the angel came to strengthen Thee, so hast Thou come to me. Were I knowingly to yield, in this matter, to what conscience forbids, I should feel myself as an outcast. The thought of Susie would haunt me forever.

How the world would smile at all this, as a sentimental little affair! To what human soul could

I disclose it, as it is to me, and hope for sympathy? To none, the wide world over. What is it not worth to me now to carry it all to the Master! This secret anguish is one that I could tell to no man standing visibly, face to face, before me.—I think not even to the Son of Man Himself. But now I can pour it, all without embarrassment, into His ear, and there is a wonderful uplift in the strength He affords! I can do all things through Him.

JUNE 26.

I have passed the crisis. I have come through it with a good conscience, and am in perfect peace on that score. But may God be merciful and uphold me, that it may not cost my life! Mr. Vaughn and I—I dare not call him George again, even here—were walking on the street, where he overtook me on my way home from the post-office, when we passed Susie. She greeted us kindly, but a single glance from her eyes decided me forever. I cannot describe it. If it had been anger or envy or disdain, it would have been powerless. But it was as if cold steel, at the moment, had gone to her heart. I had a like feeling myself. But at once—I believe with help from above—the whole moral strength within me rose to say, It is enough! My choice is made. O how I longed to throw myself into her arms and tell

her frankly all that was in my heart! But the bitterness of this whole trial is that it has gone on beneath the surface—a worm at the core or a torturing tumor in the body. I could not stop to speak to Susie. There could be no explanation between us. To intimate that I knew of her interest in him would have only wounded her more deeply. I made an excuse to Mr. Vaughn for stopping on an errand at Mrs. Wilkin's, by whose house we were passing, and was immensely relieved when, he had left me, to find she was not at home. It is simply dreadful to be suspected by Susie of treachery toward her, and remain silent under it.

JUNE 28.

Another complication! I am caught in a pitiless net of circumstances, and flutter and beat against the meshes and fall exhausted and helpless. Mr. Vaughn called last evening. He was evidently surprised and somewhat pained that I left him so suddenly just after meeting Susie. I think he suspected vaguely some connection between the two events. To my distress—I write in all truthfulness—he was more tender that evening than I had seen him before. I could think of nothing but Retzsch's outline of the celestial battle, where the angels only drop roses on the demons, but every rose, in falling, turns to a blistering flame

of fire. He seemed anxious—though constrained by my manner—to intimate that he had previously meant more than I had supposed. I sat like a home in winter—that is warm and aglow within, but hung with snow and icicles without. The duty was upon me, as I felt, to freeze him as toward me. Evidently he was grieved. If Susie had been mentioned I believe I should have broken down in tears. How can I endure this much longer? How long will it last? I made a stupid mistake, too, that involves me still farther. As he was leaving, in a mechanical way and from sheer force of habit, I asked him to call again. But, when his face brightened, and he answered, so eagerly, “Thank you! I shall be glad to,” I awoke to my folly. Had I let out unawares some breath of the warmth within? What *am* I to do?

JUNE 30.

Mr. Vaughn has called again. Though he felt so far repelled as to say nothing definite, it is no longer possible to doubt his feeling. It thrills me with a delight that I cannot suppress—and a pang like that of a poisoned arrow. I am flung back and forth from one to the other, helplessly. While longing to rush into his arms—as I now know I could, with full welcome—I stand back as calmly as any prude. And the farther I with-

draw the warmer grows his interest, as if fearful of losing his prize. Yet—the suspicious question haunts me—has he been untrue to Susie? Nothing that I have ever seen in him, or heard of him, would justify the fear. But he has been to me as the moon to the earth—showing only one side. How do I know about the other? It can hardly be that Susie is so devoted to him without having had something responsive. What can it all mean? I am trying to be true to her; but the very endeavor, drawing him toward me, works treachery toward her. And, for her sake, I am cruelly wounding him to whom I would not for the world give a trace of annoyance. While I love them both sincerely, I am grieving them both to the heart. And I cannot explain to either. Dear Lord and Master! there is no human help. I leave the cruel entanglement all to Thee.

JULY 7.

A dreadful thing has happened. Mr. and Mrs. Wickham and Susie were crossing the railway in their carryall. They were on the stone bridge and the express train was hidden from them around the curve. It had whistled only a moment before, but seemed farther away than it really was, and they made no allowance for its fearful speed. Their horse, too, balked for an instant, and the

engine struck the rear of the carriage. The carryall was wrecked and all three thrown two or three rods away. None were killed, but Susie is severely injured. My first impulse, of course, was to run to her bedside; but this horrid complication holds me back. I might carry her pain instead of comfort. Besides, they are keeping her, for the present, under opiates. The first thought—that this horrid affair may cut the Gordian knot from around me—so shocks and shames me that I am trying to drive it out of mind. It adds a sickening sense of guilt to the distress I was bearing before. Is it an exhalation from a deeper and viler bed of selfishness than I have supposed it possible for me to hold within? God grant—may He help me to say it sincerely—that, whatever the result to me, the dear girl may recover!

JULY 8.

Mr. Vaughn called again, last evening, and I have had another hour of confused, bewildering emotion. A light, however, at one point, fell on my path. In referring to the accident, he spoke so as clearly to imply that he had only the interest in Susie that any neighbor might naturally feel. This was so plain and astonished me so much that I was suddenly betrayed, without thinking of all the bearings of the words, into saying:

“Why, Mr. Vaughn, I thought you had a more personal interest than I should now infer.”

He answered promptly and earnestly, somewhat hurt :

“Certainly not, Miss Herbert, I never had, though I highly esteem her. I am sure she would say I had never given the least reason for any such impression.”

He seemed quite bent on assuring me of this, apparently hoping it would dissipate my coolness. Of course I believed him, and it greatly relieved me. But I am not so sure, as he appears to be, of what Susie would say. With her the wish may have been father to the thought. Though without tangible ground for her hope, she may have still hoped there was something of that spiritual affinity on which I was inclined to rely.

JULY 10.

It was the doctor's opinion, after the first and somewhat hasty examination, that Susie's injuries were not fatal. But I now hear that, if she should recover at all, which is doubtful, it could be only to become a confirmed invalid. The spine is injured. So, as I feared that the new and sad situation should relieve me of any farther hesitation, and feared also, that she might misunderstand my neglect, I went to-day to see and, if possible, com-

fort her. She has learned enough of the case to have dismissed all desire to live. The dear soul has long looked toward the other life, and felt the charm of it, as I never yet have. And in this apparent nearness of it, we both felt released from restraints and embarrassments, of the earth, earthy, that had held us before. I told her, when we were alone, and had talked, for a while, in close confidence, that I must unbosom myself in regard to Mr. Vaughn. Not divulging, of course, what he had told me of his own attitude toward her, I assured her that I had refrained from any intrusion between her and him.

“I am glad to believe you, Alice,” she answered, turning toward me with a heavenly smile, “but do not, my dear friend, suppose me any farther troubled as to that. I cannot tell you how small a matter it appears to me now. I feel like a bird on the twig, with wings half spread for flight. The attraction of heaven so reaches down and around me, that my whole thought and interest have already launched away from earth. As Dr. Payson said, ‘I am as a mote floating in the golden glory of a sunbeam.’ I could not have said, a few days ago, what I now say, most sincerely, that, if Mr. Vaughn and you are drawn together, I shall from my heart, congratulate you both. It is commonly much harder to rejoice with them who do

rejoice than to weep with them that weep. But I have reached the point where one is as easy as the other. From my soul I shall invoke a blessing on your union, and feel that it is I rather than you who should be envied."

I gazed on the seraphic creature as she lay with face white as her pillow, yet with the heaven she was so assured of already appearing in her eyes. Though my thoughts, even since I entered on the new life, have been mainly of earth and the duties assigned me here, I began to feel, at least slightly as she does so fully, like a bird of passage when autumn calls it away to the land of sunshine and of flowers. As I kissed Susie good bye and left her, I felt that I was descending from a Mount of Transfiguration.

VI.

JULY 12.

George called again, last evening. I am in such a flutter, even this morning, that I can hardly manage my pen. I could see, in his look, as he took his seat near me in the back parlor, what excitement of feeling there was within. His struggles to master it and put on a calm exterior, were really pathetic. But I had the sweet consciousness that I was the magician who had raised this storm, and that I alone could quell in. Dear Susie, though lying on the bed weak as a babe, had had the strength to throw off a ponderous load from me; and I must have betrayed it to George in my looks, despite myself. It was an exquisite, moonlight evening, with a soul-like softness in all the air, and the ground tessellated with the shadows of the leaves. As we sat by the glass door, opening out on the veranda, it seemed to me that Nature, though we call her "mother" and "dame," was as romantic as any young girl.

He asked about Susie's condition, and, without

disclosing my conversation with her day before yesterday, I told him of her delightful anticipations of the other life. Naturally enough we drifted into a discussion of that subject, which, I find, is drawing more and more of my thought. The theme seemed to me to throw a sacredness into the love which, as we were both rapidly discovering, was mutual. I could almost see the Master laying a hand on the head of each of us.

We had said, up to this point, nothing that any two young friends might not have said to each other. But I knew that his *eyes*, and felt that my own, were carrying on a colloquy, equally, with our lips. The sweet thought of that which our eyes conveyed pervaded all we said. Though our talk would not have been called a lovers' communion, it was like a delicate dish on the table, bearing one name but thoroughly flavored with an extract that bears another. For myself, perhaps I enjoyed this state of suppressed love—with what I knew would be the issue—more than an open declaration. The stream swelled higher because of the obstruction.

We kept up all the social formalities, without a word of endearment. It seemed to me as a young groom and bride in company, calling each other "Mr. Brown," and "Mrs. Brown," while both aglow, underneath, with their devotion. The very

contrast between the surface and what lay below had a delicious charm for me. I half dreaded the denouement that, I knew, was sure to come.

George, who is a passionate admirer of Lowell, repeated part of his exquisite "Prayer," when, at the lines,

"She hath her wings already; I
Must burst this earth-shell, ere I fly.

I cried,

"There! that is just my crude idea of Susie, only alchemized into Lowell's gold."

"Yes," said George; "but, by the way, Miss Herbert, may I make bold to ask why you intimated that you supposed me specially interested in her?"

Unwilling to tell what I knew of her interest in him, I said only:

"To tell you the truth, Mr. Vaughn, I thought I had seen looks and acts which pointed that way."

He gazed into my eyes as he asked:

"Is that the only reason you inquired?"

"Do you want a frank answer?" I said.

"Most certainly, if you can confide in me."

Trying to hide my excitement with quizzing, I asked:

"What would you give to know?" But he was too earnest for banter, and answered, eagerly:

"I would give the world to know!"

"But it might involve *me*," I objected.

"So much the better!" he cried.

"Well, then, seriously," I said, "I intimated it because I thought you were interested in me."

"And did you doubt me? Did you think it possible I could be playing a double part?"

"I was perplexed," I confessed. "I did not know you as well as I do now."

"And why was that fearful coldness, even after you knew I had no thought of any other than yourself?"

"Ah!" I said, "I must leave you to conjecture that."

After a moment, he cried:

"Now I see it! All comes out! You thought I might, perhaps, incline to Miss Wickham, and with your heroic self-sacrifice, you were determined not to be untrue to her!"

I was silent. There was nothing I could say. He sat for a moment more, the tide rising higher and higher within him, till, with open arms, he cried:

"Alice!"

I answered: "George!" and we were one for life.

I have set all this down here, because, I think it will, by and by, be interesting reading for him.

JULY 13.

I had a long, delightful talk with Susie, yesterday. Somehow she seems already half insphered in the other world, and looking in upon us as through a window from without. I said, however, nothing about the joy with which my heart is fluttering since last evening. Notwithstanding her sweet words as to George and me, she must be more than human if our actual engagement would not give her, far down within, some slight tingle of pain. For her sake I shall not wear my ring for the present. George will understand it.

But we soon fell into a discussion of the state just after death, to which she looks forward, as probably not far distant. I could not see why the other world is so darkly curtained in—why we are not allowed some glimpse between the folds of the veil.

“Well, Alice,” she said, “one reason came to me, the other day. You know that father is guardian to little Clary Holmes, and that the child is heir to a large fortune. Now, I was thoughtless enough, when the little fellow was wanting a new ‘Safety,’ to say :

“‘Clary, you know you will have money—’ when I caught mother’s eyes staring at me, from behind him, in distress, with her finger on her lips.

“ Ah, yes, Susie ! ” I said, “ I see what you are coming to. If Clary knew what wealth is to be his, by and by, it would turn his little head, and whisk his thoughts away from his lessons and every other duty of the present.”

“ Exactly so,” she replied, “ and I need not draw out the application to us who are allowed but little light on our heavenly inheritance. If the Veil were fully drawn aside and all the magnificence of heaven, with the enrapturing face of Jesus in the midst of it, were to burst on our sight, we should probably go through life like somnambulists, absorbed in our visions and caring little for earthly affairs.”

“ Yes,” I said, “ but it seems as if we might, without harm, be allowed to know something more than we do. When Julie passed away—you know she and I were twins, and she was as dear as life to me—it seemed as if she had been taken in through an open door from which the light flashed out for a moment, and then the door was closed against me, as I stood without in the dark.”

“ Not quite so,” she replied, as she looked earnestly into my face. “ If an angel were to come, offering to tell you three or four things that will be true of your future body, wouldn't you gladly listen ? ”

“ That I would ! ” I said.

“Well,” she rejoined, “Paul does that.”

“Where? How?” I asked.

“In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. For one thing, your body will be pure in substance, and imperishable from disease or sin—raised in incorruption. For a second thing, it will be beautiful—raised in glory.”

“That’s a comfort,” I said, “for a creature as homely as I! But I’m afraid it would spoil the identity of poor, old Dorothy Sims! We shouldn’t know her.”

“For a third thing,” continued Susie, laughing, “it will be of great strength—raised in power. And, for a fourth thing, it will be transfused and all aglow with soul—raised a spiritual body. So it will be fitted, as an animal body cannot be, for the soul’s uses. Now, is not all that something of a disclosure?”

“Yes, indeed,” I said. “But ‘as an animal body cannot be’—how dismally true that is! My body was a drag on me this morning, when I wanted to catch a car, and couldn’t get the lumbering thing along fast enough. I often wish I had two bodies, as an express-rider, in old times, used to tire out two or three horses in succession. It is sometimes as if I had a ball and chain at each ankle.”

Just then I happened to put on my eye-glasses, to look at a bird outside the window.

“Yes,” said Susie, “and you are showing now how the soul fills and overflows the body as it fails to meet her wants. Did you ever think how we *piece out* the body—the eye with spectacles and microscope and telescope, the voice and ear with the telephone, the hands with labor-saving machinery, the feet with locomotives and electric cars? Even so, the soul cannot begin to find full accommodation for itself in the body.”

I could easily see that she was illustrating her theme, at the moment, in her own person. Her enthusiastic spirit, in the ardor of her speech, was overstraining her poor, broken and enfeebled frame. I laid my finger on her lips, told her she must talk no more, kissed her and came away, promising to call again soon.

VII.

JULY 17.

Yesterday, Dr. Bentley preached on being wise beyond what is written. I was uncomfortable, anyway, before he read his text. My new dress was tight under the arms—why *can't* Polly Meekam make a fit?—and felt like a straitjacket. Then Harry, who stands in no awe of his big sister—mamma was ill and at home—jumped about like a monkey in its cage, and I should have been uneasy enough if the sermon had been the very balm of Gilead. But there was more gall than balm for me. The Doctor evidently felt called to put on the black cap and dispense judgment to us sinners. He may, however, have been aiming at the Spiritualists, who have just started a service that stands challenging our church from the hall across the way.

But he launched his bolts at any one who longs to look into other-world mysteries. Heaven knows, most of our people are safe enough from that! Cannot he see that they are rather below such

curiosity than on the level of it? Moles are in no danger of blinding themselves, looking into the sun. How can any mortal, with brains in his head and a heart in his bosom, from whom a dear soul has gone into the upper glory, keep from gazing after him and wondering about his surroundings? I hope our sweet, saintly Mrs. Bentley will be long spared to the Doctor. If she should not, he would never repeat that sermon.

JULY 18.

Last evening George (who, of course, comes every evening, with a day-call sandwiched in occasionally) and I had a delightful talk; chiefly about the other life. On *some* subjects I feel as one walking nearly abreast of him. But as to this—he has given so much reading and thought to it—I am as a little child, tagging after one who leads him up hill.

I referred to my talk with Susie, and spoke of my wonder that these bodies of ours need be such clogs on the soul.

“Perhaps,” he said, “it was because God fore-saw that men would sin, and would need rather burdensome bodies, as Adam needed the curse on the soil, to keep them out of indolence and luxury and vice. I imagine that evil spirits are so ripe in iniquity, partly, because they *are* spirits, with no material bodies to hinder them.”

“You mean,” I said, “that flesh and blood are brakes on the train for men who are on the down grade. But how with us who hope we are on the up grade?”

“Why, the adjustment,” he replied, “must be made for those who would be the immense majority. In fact even *we* may need this check, more than we suppose.”

“Yes,” I said, “but I seem to have a sort of divided personality, and never to be able to get myself wholly together. Up yonder, I hope, body and soul will be kneaded more thoroughly into one—will become homogeneous.”

“Just so,” answered George. “I doubt whether we shall be conscious of having bodies at all. When you look to right or left, it does not occur to you that you are turning the pupils of your eyes. In that sense, I suppose, the spiritual body will be all eye.”

“Like the magical piece of carpet in the Arabian Nights,” I said, “on which the owner took his seat, and presto! was whisked miles away, to any point he wished. But matter is one thing, spirit another. How can they blend?”

“Well,” he said, “flesh and blood, it is true, cannot inherit the kingdom. That *may* exclude matter of any sort. But do you know that matter and spirit cannot blend? People as bright as you

and I must be careful not to know too much. Scientists tell us that we know as little of the essential nature of matter as of that of spirit. We know only the *properties* of each. What if they should prove to be more nearly of one nature than we imagine?"

"You are diving in mystery so deep," said I, "that I almost lose sight of you."

"No," he laughed, "I am diving out of it—ignoring it. But, however all this may be, I believe that, as to the body, whatever its substance, we shall be masters of the situation up yonder."

"I have sometimes thought," I said, "that I should tire of so much bliss, through eternity. After a few centuries, I might want a little bitter to renew my relish for the sweet."

"But," he replied, "do you remember *why* we tire of any one emotion long continued? It is due to the exhaustion of the nerve-force. But Isaac Taylor says we shall probably, in the spiritual body, know nothing of exhaustion—any more than here we tire of breathing."

I can find no words to tell what exquisite delight high themes like these throw into our interviews. I have often wondered how empty-headed young lovers contrive to enjoy themselves. Two souls coming together point-blank, with nothing to think of but 'I love you' and 'you love me,'

just living on each other—I should suppose the very intensity of their love would exhaust them. But, with a common and inspiring object for thought and aim in both, so that they meet, not point-blank but, on converging lines in *that*,—what a thrill in the communion!

JULY 22.

I have made a change for Marguerite, which was an act of self-sacrifice that cut to the quick. Mother and I felt, almost from her first day with us, that she ought not to be in kitchen service. She has a keenness of perception and natural dexterity that make her invaluable to us. But to employ such a woman at such work is almost like setting Ole Bull at grinding a street-organ. That she has not repined or complained only makes it more of a grievance to our consciences, for it is another sign of the fineness of her nature. Though she nobly acts out the old distich in my school copy-book,

“ Honor and shame from no condition rise ;
Act well your part ; there all the honor lies,”

that rather increases than relieves our mortification. I have seen persons in some such position, who, though esthetically fine, were morally so coarse as to chill my sympathy. But the fineness in Marguerite is more evenly distributed.

The idea of asking people to take music-lessons of our servant-girl seemed at first so absurd that I was almost in despair. It would have been idle to argue for her. So we provided her a new dress, that her interior and exterior might be more in harmony, and made way for her to sing once or twice in the church choir. That settled the matter. No one since has ventured to decry her. She has a class and is successful and grateful and happy.

JULY 24.

Susie has, in some way, heard of my engagement, and speaks of it, as I might have known she would, like an angel. It relieves me immensely to be able to believe that it costs her no *effort* to do so. She evidently feels no more dependent than an angel on the earth or its affairs. Without a particle of any selfish, other-world absorption, and while constantly thoughtful for those around her, she lives in a perpetual vision of the life above, that overspreads her whole horizon. And this constant dwelling on—almost *in*—that life seems to open it to her and to increase the suggestiveness of her mind in regard to it.

Referring, to-day, to First Corinthians, the thirteenth chapter, eleventh verse, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I have become a

man, I have put away childish things," she said :

"I cannot help thinking of this as bearing on the *variety* of our occupations in the better life. Thomas Paine, you know, sneered at the Christian heaven as 'an eternal psalm-singing.' But we seem to be here promised something else to engage us. When mother had the charge of our little Teddy, how narrow was the circle of his life! She washed and dressed and fed and put him to sleep, and washed and dressed and fed and put him to sleep, day after day and week after week. Perhaps he never had a dozen thoughts in all his life. But, suppose he had lived to manhood and become a merchant, or lawyer, an author or traveler to foreign lands! How immensely his range would have widened! How vast the variety! Now, does not Paul hint at this in pointing us forward to the life beyond? Some old minister said he should want to spend the first thousand years in gazing at his Saviour. A very pious thing to say, no doubt. But, however enrapturing the vision of the Unveiled Face, he would not wish to do any such thing for ten centuries. An inborn, innocent instinct in us calls for variety of thought and change of occupation. In our imperfect state on earth, steady routine, as Dr. Bushnell well said, is needful to restrain us

from vagary and wild adventure. But, when we escape from this go-cart of our infancy into the grand sweep of our ripened powers, we shall find, not less, but a thousandfold more, variety in that life above."

The dear creature, just like herself, is sewing, lying on her bed, to help the Ladies' Benevolent Society, and gathers her Sunday-school class around her, as regularly as she ever did.

VIII.

JULY 27.

I have just come from the sick bed of Deacon Harrow. Soon after his fine stroke of business in cutting down the salaries of his clerks, he was attacked with typhoid fever. Probably, though he doesn't know it, he is near his end. And his meek, patient, little wife, who does know it, has a very peculiar experience in managing him. While I was there, he took a fancy that he would like a piece of mince-pie, of which he is quite fond. Poor Mrs. Harrow was in dismay.

"Why, my dear husband," she pleaded, "Dr. Kane says I must be *very* careful about your diet. Mince-pie would, I am afraid, be the death of you. Now, please let me get ready a nice little—"

"Mince-pie or nothing!" roared the Deacon in a tone that filled the house—and he got his pie.

Just as I was coming away, the nurse brought to him a dose of some soothing mixture, with which the doctor, who knew his man, was hoping to tame him into a nap. But the beverage is not to his taste.

“No !” he said, setting his teeth together, “I don’t want it.”

“But, my dear sir,” she persisted, “it is the doctor’s prescription. It will quiet your nerves, and give you rest. Now, please—” bringing the spoon toward his lips.

“I tell you I won’t have it !” shouted her patient—for sick as he is, that temper of his still gathers up every particle of vitality there is in him. Then, at the instant, he punctuated the sentence with a fling of his hand that upset the syrup over her white kerchief and ornamented the sheets with it liberally.

The Deacon is, on the whole, after his fashion, a good man. He has, all his life, been making a fight—too often a losing one—against his wild propensities. He said to Dr. Bentley, a few months ago—the Deacon is plain-spoken,—

“Doctor, I am naturally one of the meanest skinflints you ever knew. It hurts like the toothache for me to give. So I wish you’d keep at me. Don’t let up. Every cent you get out of me is pure gain for the Lord.”

Shortly before that, an agent for the Church Building Society called on him. The old gentleman, on account of his deafness, didn’t understand, at first, at what the man was aiming. When he did, the poor agent discovered that

the Deacon was gunpowder and he himself a match.

“No, sir!” he bawled. “No end to the calls! Tired to death with ’em! A new one every day! No use talking—sha’n’t do it!”

The solicitor had never met such an explosion. It almost knocked him over backwards, and he retreated in dismay. But, the next day, the Deacon, meeting him in the street, shambled up to him and snapped out:

“Mornin’, sir! Rather rough I was with you yesterday. Take that!” Then thrusting a fifty-dollar bill into his hand, he made off before the agent could thank him. After his rather peculiar way, he is a good man.

But the fact is, the Deacon is a victim of bad heredity. The worst enemy he meets on earth is his grandfather, who has been lying in the cemetery for thirty years. Some bad element, ricocheting down the lineage, struck this old party and then leaped over to the Deacon. There is great allowance to be made for him.

SEPTEMBER 2.

Deacon Harrow has passed away. At the funeral Dr. Bentley commended him for his love of the church and of all good causes, and his Christian life on the whole. It was no time or place

for any qualification. Funeral sermons are eclectic. The speaker is not on the witness-stand, to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," with relatives and friends of the deceased sitting by.

On the way home I walked with Mrs. Bentley. The Doctor had gone out to the cemetery.

"Well," she said, apparently drawing a long breath of relief, "we all knew the faults of the good man. But he has escaped them now, and is perfect in holiness."

The remark set me thinking. As her words went down from my ears to the heart, they had to work their passage all the way. I made no special reply, but determined to talk it over with George, when he should come in the evening. And so I did. He had hardly got comfortably ensconced in the chair I always set for him, when I went at him on the subject. Quoting what Mrs. Bentley had said, I asked if he believed it—if, with a character as imperfect as that of the Deacon down to his last breath, it was probable that he had passed, instantaneously, into the perfection of an angel.

"No, my darling," he said, with emphasis, "I believe no such thing."

But, resolved to put him to his proofs, I asked:

"Does not the catechism say that saints at death

are made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory ?”

“Yes,” said George, with a rather peculiar smile, “that may be catechism ; but it is neither Bible nor reason.”

“But you don’t think the Deacon is lost ?” I exclaimed.

“Certainly not,” he said.

“Then you leave him,” I suggested, “in some kind of a condition between the lost and the saved ?”

“Not that, either,” said George. “But, so far as I can see, he carried into the redeemed life a good many of his strange characteristics.”

“But the Bible is against you !” I said, as I struck an *ex cathedra* attitude.

“Ah !” he replied, “now you have said something ! The catechism came from good men who had hardly got their heads out from mediæval shadows. But, prove me wrong from the Bible, and I recant. Notice, however, please, that I speak not of what the good may *become* in the far future, but of what men like Deacon Harrow probably *are*, just after their last breath.”

“Well,” I said, after looking over my ammunition for a moment, “doesn’t the Psalmist say (xvii. 15), ‘I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness’ ?”

“As to the first clause,” he answered, “good souls in this life are constantly called righteous. But they are a considerable stretch from perfection. And as to the last clause—‘with thy likeness,’ it probably means ‘appearance’—when I awake with, or at, thine appearance.”

“Then,” I complained, “you make the Bible a violin on which you can play any tune?”

“No, my dear girl,” he rejoined, “but a hand-organ, on which you can *not* play any tune.”

“Well, what of Jesus’ words to the dying thief, ‘This day thou shalt be with me in paradise’?” (Luke xxiii. 43).

“They teach,” he replied, “that the poor creature was going into a state of blessedness, but by no means of necessity into one of instant perfection.”

“Then,” I asked, rallying and renewing the word-fight, “does not Paul say (Phil. i. 23) that to depart and be with Christ he esteemed *very far better* than remaining here?”

“Certainly,” said George, “but not that he expected perfection, at once. It would be far better for a poor Chinaman, converted, to move from the edge of starvation in a slum of Peking to a Christian home of wealth and intelligence in one of our great cities. The new domicile might seem a heaven to him. But he would still discover

faults to throw off, and virtues to gain. Doubtless they make rapid spiritual progress, beyond the veil. Transplant a little orange-tree from its box in a conservatory here to the tropics, and you soon see the effect of the change. I suppose the life in paradise is a sort of moral tropics for the growth of character. Freed from all earthly care and weariness and sickness and temptation, we may make swift progress ; yet that is not instant perfection."

"But there shall not enter into it anything unclean."

"That," replied George, "seems clearly to refer to the condition of things following the grand consummation of our Christian Economy, far away in the distant ages—not to the state just after death. But I think we have discussed theology long enough, don't you?"

So we dropped the matter for the present. But I shall certainly probe him for his notions again, before long.

IX.

SEPTEMBER 5.

Called again, yesterday, to see Susie. The doctor says she shows more vitality than he expected, and may live for a considerable time. I am struck with the change in the dear girl, as she enters the land of Beulah, on her pilgrimage. She was always much handsomer than I. When she looked over my shoulder, as I was standing by my mirror, I could not help feeling that I was nothing but the foil to a gem. But, if she was handsome then, I should call her beautiful now. A sculptor could have reproduced most of her comeliness before, but it would take a painter like Raphael with one of his Madonnas, to do it now. The whole inner life so richly suffuses the features, she is so lighted up from within, that it is an inspiration only to sit and look into her eyes.

And it is the more so because of the contrast with her poor, disfigured, wasted body. That, somehow, seems to succumb to the animal necessities of its weakness and helplessness, while, in

the face, the soul appears triumphant. Yet, in another aspect, as I see how fully delivered she is, from all interest in the body, in either its enjoyments or wants or appetites, she seems already, in good part, a disembodied spirit. I never before thought of all this as a possibility. It is as if a throng of eager blessings had been following her, and, now that her busy life has halted, had overtaken and were crowding in upon her.

Though she is so eager for release that her time goes slowly, the ripening of her spiritual life is swift. She has long been good, in the common sense of the word. She has had a sort of honest, robust conscientiousness. But that seems now only the raw material which is transforming itself to a higher, finer quality. The relations of it were largely earthly before; but are heavenly now. Breathing the atmosphere of heaven, as she does, seems to diffuse through her whole being some subtile, spiritual ether, as if she were soon to rise with it out of our sight.

Yet she is no typical, regulation sort of saint. She has a lively interest in all that goes on around her, enjoys all cheerful talk and laughs, loudly as her strength will allow, like the rest of us.

Nothing, however, is so interesting to her as the anticipation of the state to which she looks

eagerly forward. I referred to Deacon Harrow, and to George's notions, of the other night.

"Well, she said, "why not? I don't see how a man who has been so hard pushed by bad propensities, as an engineer is pushed by the train when he nears an open bridge and would gladly stop, is to break the momentum in a moment, at his last breath, and become as perfect as was our Lord in Judea—do you?"

No, I confessed, I did not.

"When I was visiting in Lawrence," she continued, "I heard of a good deacon who was much given to thought on the other life. He had been educated at West Point. And on his deathbed, his wife overheard him whispering to himself:

"'Another world!—new scenes!—a foreign language!—other society!—all strange!—and yet an *identity!*'"

"He delighted to think he should see himself there as the same being that he was here. Now, you and I know very well, as to many a Christian, that his habits of feeling and thought and affection and, too often, desire, are so inwoven with his imperfection that it would take something more than an air-brake to stop the train of his life. And, if it could be done, it would almost jolt him out of his identity. He would be dazed and have to go groping about after himself over

there. The old, Roman adage we used to hear at Wellesley—‘*Qui trans mare currunt cœlum, non animum, mutant*,’* applies, I imagine, quite as well to them who cross that other ocean that we all must sail so soon.”

Just then the bell rang, and Mrs. Bentley called. The good woman makes her rounds, especially to the sick, as regularly as her husband. She talks of “We who are in the ministry,” and perhaps with as good right as he to the rank and honor. She came in with a sober, compassionate face, as to a feeble sister with whom she was to condole. But the change in her look was amusing when Susie called out, rather lustily for her.

“Come in, my dear shepherdess! Glad to see you! I want you to hear some of my heresies. I believe you know already how much of a sceptic I am on the notion that, at death, we are all made at once perfect in holiness; and why I think the Bible teaches no such thing. I was about saying to Alice that every science, astronomy, geology, biology, archæology, history, shows that God has slowly *developed* the earth and man. Adam and Eve, as I read my Bible, were, even before they sinned, no such models of humanity as Milton makes them in *Paradise Lost*. They were naked

* They who cross the sea change their region only, not their nature.

without embarrassment, just as little children are now. With the whole garden except a single tree free to them, they fell, under the slightest temptation, out of childish curiosity. The man loaded the woman with the burden of it, as uncivilized men do now. They thought they could hide from God behind a tree. They lived on raw fruits, apparently, and could make no better clothing than fig-leaf aprons."

"But," said Mrs. Bentley, as she saw to what Susie was coming, "God *could* make us perfect at death. He could have made the world perfect from the start."

"If he could," replied Susie, "He hasn't. Things, as Herbert Spencer says, were not put together carpenter-fashion. They have *grown* under the Lord's hand. And if that has been the universal method of his operation, through the earth's existence, does He conclude, at our death, that it is a mistake, and adopt a new one? Is there any proof that the other world is, any more than this, a world of *miracles*? Why should not the Lord develop character there, as He does all things, with few exceptions, here, through the natural laws He has established? Death is no moral event—but only the putting off of one garment of the soul and putting on another. The greatest really moral event is conversion to Christ. And that that

leaves a long course of growth in grace to be gone through, after it, we all know, to our sorrow."

Here her mother broke in,

"As to miracles, Susie," she said, "it would be *one* miracle if so long a talk should not thoroughly use you up. So, with our friends' leave, I will adjourn this meeting."

And she took us down into the parlor.

X.

SEPTEMBER 8.

After the Ladies' Benevolent Society adjourned to-day Sybil Martin and I took a walk in the woods, over on Winsbury hill. Harry met us, coming home from school, and I took him along. He was sure there would be chestnuts there. I was sure there wouldn't, for there has been no frost. But I didn't tell him so.

She is a queer character, Sybil; and yet, for some reasons, I like her. She dresses horridly. Of harmony in colors she has no more idea than a goose. I sometimes wonder if she isn't color-blind. Her bonnet looks as if it had been put on by the wind. She has big hands and feet, and, as if in scorn of the cowardice of hiding the fact, wears gloves and shoes both a number or too larger than she needs. My darling Susie's fullness of nature seems to be evenly distributed all over her. She showed it, before that dreadful accident, as plainly in her exquisite taste in dress as in discussing literature or art. But Sybil is a diamond

half polished and half in the rough. I can't understand how a woman capable of such subtile thought and poetic fancies, and, often, graceful speech, can make such a guy of herself when she puts on her clothes. Even Harry, young as he is, and boy as he is, begins to see it, and sometimes puts me in dismay for fear she will see his grimaces at her. To-day he dropped a little behind her and, twitching my dress to make me look, mimicked her awkward gait and the pose of her bonnet till I almost burst in keeping down my laughter. But Sybil has a head full of ideas and is as unselfish as a fountain.

It was a lovely afternoon. Everything appeared ripe, in the opening of autumn, and not yet mellow. The brook stole along with so soft and winning a whisper, when we crossed the foot-bridge, that it seemed almost rude to leave it, and the squirrels winked a welcome as they stopped a moment to look and then scampered away up among the foliage of the grand, solemn, old chestnuts.

We had not gone far before our talk drifted toward Deacon Harrow, about whom there had been much said at the Society. Sybil has, in some way, learned considerable as to that dreadful grandfather of his. It seems the connection was on the father's side, and the Deacon's mother had told him, in his childhood and after his father's death,

what sort of a character this ancestor was. Though the Deacon was too humble and honest to charge all his own unhappy temper to the dead man, he had, from his youth up, a sense of having suffered from him a cruel wrong.

"I was cursed," Sybil says he was once heard to cry out, "before I was born! Why was this man allowed to hand down to me, in my very blood, a strange fire that I can fight but never quench? Why couldn't he see that he would be to his descendants the bitterest foe they would ever meet? An attack from without you can ward off. But, when your enemy has gotten into you, what can you do?"

I should judge, from Sybil's account, that the old ancestor had gone on gathering up depravity, as he accumulated money, and then delivered over the mass of it, solidly, to his unhappy descendant.

"Now you know," she said, after telling me all this, "the Deacon was not converted till he was over fifty. His habits were all fixed. His disposition was stereotyped. His views of things had become part of his inner life. All the tendrils of his nature had clung to the old objects so long that it seemed a mutilation of him to tear them off."

Just then, we caught sight of the windows of Squire Wither's house, on which the evening sun was shining.

“There !” said she, pointing at them, “it would sometimes almost seem that the Deacon’s religion was more like the light on those windows than a fire within !”

“But you think he was, on the whole, a good man ?” I asked, in some alarm.

“Yes,” she said, “on the whole, I think he was. But, do you, know, I was a doubting Thomas, while Mrs. Bentley was telling our knot of ladies, over in the corner, in the Society, that he had already become perfect in holiness ?”

Evidently the pastor’s wife, being “in the ministry,” has been busying herself to keep heresy out of the flock.

“I don’t see,” said Sybil, “how the Lord is to manage us as machines, after death. You can turn a steamboat which way you choose. Even with that, you must allow for momentum. You cannot veer in a trice. But men are made with free wills. If they are to remain moral and responsible creatures, they must continue free forever. And a free being must be slowly changed, by influences around him. He must act from within. It is impossible to make up a character and then thrust it into him. On the first of March, by the calendar, spring has arrived. But spring-weather is another matter. Though the winter-months have gone by, the old chill holds on for a while.

The earth is too cold to be struck through in a moment with the new warmth and balm. May it not naturally be so in passing through the transition from our wintry life to the eternal spring? May not death be our first of March?"

"But," I asked, as we took seats on a rock, "does not this rather degrade the other life--this admitting the idea of anything less than perfection at once?"

"Why, no," said Sybil, "it never struck me so. The ultimate state of perfection, at which we arrive, is, in any event, the same. The question is only whether we arrive at it by a perpendicular, and what seems to me an impossible, ascent, or, more naturally, and as character develops here on earth, by progress up an inclined plane. Besides, the common notion cuts us off from the sympathy of departed friends. I heard, in Colorado, last summer, of what they call a "fault" in a mine. The vein runs along horizontally for a while, and then suddenly stops. The miner is wholly at a loss. He must dig and blast, here and there, till, perhaps ten feet higher, he finds the vein again running on at the upper level. Some subterranean explosion, centuries ago, broke the connection and threw it up. Now, the common notion makes death such an upheaval, throwing a friend far away out of connection with us here

below. He would have, of course, immense advantage, anyway, in his freedom from earthly care and temptation. But how far could he sympathize with us in our struggles? Are we not always saying that a genuine, thorough fellow-feeling for the poor is impossible in the rich? But, if our departed friends are striving toward perfection in a common effort with us, how much nearer and dearer will they be to us in sympathy! People ask, in perplexity, how they can know of our sins and sorrows and yet be perfect in happiness. What if it should prove that they are *not* yet perfect in happiness; but only, by a natural progress, approaching it? We put them too far away from us in some seventh heaven of sublime and awful holiness, above all interest in our affairs. I knew of a sea captain, once, who was telling a story to a little knot of friends, when he was suddenly called away to his vessel. And, years afterward, as he and the same persons happened to be together again, he took up the story where he had dropped it, with, 'Well, friends, as I was saying—' and went on to finish it. May there not be some such reunions, beyond the veil, of those who were separated here? May not many a dying believer's sigh, like a lark soaring into sunlight, end, up yonder in a hallelujah? But it is growing too late for us to be out here longer in the woods."

And so we strolled homeward, listening to a whippoorwill from across the meadow, and watching the sun as he winked at us with his last ray, bidding us good-night and taking his departure.

XI.

SEPTEMBER 11.

George called last evening, and is growing eager for the wedding-day. I hardly know whether I feel just as the dear fellow does about it or not. Of course I should be in an agony if I did not expect it *sometime* in the near future; but this state of engagement is so delightful that I have an interrogation-point fluttering about in me, like a bird in the cage, as to whether married life could possibly be as happy as this. We meet now on something like terms of equality. We are too high contracting powers; as when a little nation makes a treaty with one twenty times as large. But if it becomes *annexed*, alas for its insignificance! I can easily see that, if this entry were read by any one but me, it would be misunderstood. It would look as if I were not more than half in love. Now, I shouldn't halt, for an instant, at the promise to 'love, honor and obey.' It would be a perfect joy, I am sure, to do all three. But George's personality seems so im-

mensely larger than mine,—I'm afraid that, after taking me in, he would be hardly able to find me. He tastes me now only at intervals, and there is enough of me, he thinks, to suffice. But what if he had me continually? Might he not feel that he was drinking me dry? Yet, on the other hand, I often long to be so delightfully insphered. The surroundings would be charming, and certainly salubrious!

But how as to the exquisite romance of the life we are living now? Might not the effervescence subside into a rather flat residuum? I have been wishing lately that I could gather up all the subtle charm of these days, every one of which is a prose poem, these moonlight nights in which our love seems to pervade all the air—that I could somehow distil all this into an essence with which to flavor those days of homely duty that must follow marriage. I find a sort of charm in this suspended state in which I am neither a wife nor single, that I certainly did not find before I entered it and may lose when I leave it. There is all the fascination of romance floating over a sterling reality. Everything has a weird charm thrown over it as if seen by moonlight or through a golden haze.

But, after all, and on the whole, I am delighted with the thought of being lost in George. We

are two drops that have not yet blended, and marriage is the touch that will absorb us both into one, rounded, symmetric life.

Then, as to the wedding, whenever it comes—how many invitations? How much of an affair shall we make it? Papa and mamma want a little army of people and the whole house turned into a kind of festival hall. They say I am the only daughter, and, if they must surrender me, they want to give me “a good send off.” But I would rather not strike twelve at first. For George (who laughs and kisses me, and says, so he gets me, he doesn’t care how) this grand entrée into married life would be just in keeping. He has a royal nature, entitled to royal nuptials. But I—I should have almost a superstitious fear of some Nemesis following the grand show. So far as it was for me, I should be haunted by a feeling that I was costing more than I was worth, and mounting a stage where I should be stage-struck and unfit for my part. Somewhere I have read of rich Jews, in the East, dreading the tax gatherer, who have low, mean doorways through their front walls, on the street, to hide the splendor within. I am not sure but I should like to enter on my rich life of joy through some such modest portal. But, as papa and mamma do not give me away until the ceremony, I suppose they

may, up to that point, do with me as they choose.

As we were talking of love, last evening, George referred to those great, deep words of Paul, "love never faileth."

"How wonderful it seems," he said, "that we can take this principle of love to God and man, which is the sum of all duty, and then know that our plan of life is made up for all eternity! I was reading, the other day, President Edwards' Resolution, "Resolved to do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory and my own good, profit and pleasure, on the whole, *without any consideration of the time, whether now or never so many myriads of ages hence.*" So, you see, he took the endless ages into possession, as we do our tomorrow. He saw that they all belonged to him, as an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. He laid out his roadway straight through the veil, onward and upward into the great hereafter. I call that sublime engineering! While one man pants for fame, another drudges for gold, another wallows in pleasure,—or perhaps the same man does all three successively, whiffing about—a Christian holds right on, unswerving forever. God has entered into him, with something of his own, eternal immutability! I was reminded of it, years ago while in college. A schooner came

down the river, with a fair wind, toward the bridge. The keeper swung the draw in ample season, and, under full headway, without swerving a point from her bearing, she glided through into the broad, deep Sound, and the ocean beyond. Death is no more to a Christian than was the open draw to that vessel."

"But," I said, "you make the transition so small a matter that heaven itself, as a *place*, seems hardly to amount to much. The Master certainly said, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' When we children got into the museum, the rooms, with all their contents, were such a vision of wonders that merely *being there* made us all about equally happy. Now, don't you suppose the spiritual body will have its five senses—or, as Isaac Taylor says, perhaps fifty? And may there not be a surge in upon the soul of such external delights as will submerge any internal annoyances?"

"Please remember, darling," he replied, "that, in all I have said, I refer to the *outset* of the other life. What changes ultimately there may be, I don't pretend to guess. But this traditional notion of happiness due to the place is certainly an immature one. Men of no spiritual insight here on earth look for their enjoyment from something around them—from riches, pleasures, fame, or whatever. They expect to take in happiness, as

they do health in going to the mountains or the springs. They are slow to see that any genuine, lasting joy must be from within,—from the spiritual health that one carries in him. Now this last fact will certainly be the all-absorbing fact as we emerge from death to the life above.”

“But no outward magnificence?” I asked.

“Yes, doubtless,” he replied, “transcendently such. We are in our Father’s universe. As his children we are heirs of the universe. It is as fit that righteousness should come to glory as that the vegetable life in a rose should come to beauty.

“But the chief joy of the redeemed, pervading, exalting, inspiring all other, will be that of Christ-like character. And it is against the eternal laws of moral order that two persons, dying with characters of such different grades as those of Deacon Harrow and of Susie Wickham, should enjoy, from the very first, the same reward. The Bible shows us better. Peter (2 P. i. 11), declares that whoever gives diligence to make his calling sure, whoever is in earnest, with his whole soul, for the Master, shall have an entrance ministered unto him *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom. As Bunyan has it, all the bells of heaven ring for the pilgrim entering the pearly gate. The angels seem to flock around him in a welcome that is a perfect ovation for his triumph over sin. But

there comes, after him, another, of whom Paul speaks (1 Cor. iii. 12-15)—a very different specimen of discipleship. He has built, it is true, on the right foundation. There is some genuineness in him. But, instead of building with gold, silver and precious stones, he has tumbled on wood, hay and stubble,—in other words, a miserably inconsistent life. Where there ought to be a palace, there is a hovel, a shanty. He has yielded to evil so often that his will is flaccid. While he should have the tough moral fibre of a man ripe in the new life, he is hardly out of the gristle. Men who ought to be compelled to revere him make merry over him. His brethren look at him, and then one at another in confusion.

“Now, how does Paul bring him out? When the stern ordeal comes, his wood, hay, and stubble hovel, that ought to have been a fire-proof building, is burned to ashes. He is “saved,” but as “through fire.” He is, as it were, awakened at night by the blaze in his poor rookery of a character, and flees for his life, leaving everything behind. He barely escapes into paradise. An abundant entrance for him? No! indeed. Enough that he is saved at all, a brand plucked from the burning. As Evangelist gave the pilgrim “a pull,” when he entered the Wicket Gate, to save him from the arrows of the demons, so must the

angels, I fancy, pull this poor weakling in, lest his passions should, at the last, waylay him.

“Now these are two inspired accounts, by Peter and Paul, of the way in which different Christians pass through death. And we need no omniscience to see that they do not start abreast on their eternal careers. *Whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap. We absurdly apply this only to the distinction between the righteous and the reprobates. We say that, if one man sows wheat and another darnel, one shall reap wheat and the other darnel. But how if both sow wheat, yet of widely different qualities? Are they both to reap the first and the best? The balances of eternal justice are no coal-scales, roughly dealing only with cargoes and car-loads. They are as a banker's gold-scales, that discriminate to the weight of a hair.”

Then he began to talk of the wedding—a decidedly favorite theme with him of late. We are coming to more definite plans for it. But I am sleepy to-night, and can write no more.

SEPTEMBER 14.

Discussed with George, last evening, the whole matter of the wedding. We fixed on October 15th. It is to be at the house. I hardly meant to mention the affair to Susie at all. Of course

she will know of it. But I am so completely absorbed in it, and, through it, in earthly conditions, that it is hard for me, even after all my intimacy with Susie, to see how she can avoid a somewhat jealous view of the whole matter. And, as I did not suppose it conceivable that she could be present, I meant to refer to it, when at her house, as little as possible. But the dear girl, whose mind seems almost preternaturally clear and sharp as she nears the everlasting light, has evidently suspected all this. She is so exalted, so heavenly, as to look down on our engagement, vertically, as it were, from above, rather than laterally. Without being invited, she has told me that she *is coming to the wedding!* She has actually arranged to be brought over and placed in a reclining-chair, that she may look directly on, as her George (so she had hoped to call him) pledges his faith to another. I can hardly, even yet, escape a twinge of remorse, as I think of her in connection with George. But her evidently *profound sincerity* in declaring that she shall *heartily enjoy* the occasion both gives me immense relief and shows how sublimely she is lifted into the heavenly sphere. Shall I ever, in this life, reach her height? I revere her. I almost worship her.

I descend so far in passing from Susie to the pretty details of the wedding, that the fall bruises

my feeling. But it is sweet to think of reading, by and by, the matters I am here to note—perhaps with George looking over my shoulder.

A year ago I should have thought such questions as that whether Dr. Bentley or we should face the company, during the ceremony, too petty for a moment's thought. But, as I approach the great event, it throws something of its own importance into every detail. It seems to focus all its great significance, like a huge search-light, on each little feature of the whole, bringing it out with a new meaning. If we should stand with our backs to the company, would it be respectful? Or, would it mean that, joining hands and forsaking all others, we go out into the future alone? If we should face the company, would it mean that, seeing them as representing the world, we proposed to confront it, one in heart? We have postponed this great question for after consideration.

Then, shall we have a bell of flowers, or a white dove suspended over us? As love is better than mere gladness, we have chosen the dove.

George wants me dressed entirely in white. The poor deluded soul thinks it typifies the condition within. Would that it did! How glorious is the hope set before us that sometime it will! But I shall gratify him, at least as to my exterior. The dress will be of white tulle, the veil white

lace, and my shoes white. A single white rose will be in my hair, and I shall have none but white ones in my bouquet. I should like to have Sybil Martin for one of the bridesmaids, but really dare not. She would, with all her excellence, be so sure to torment me with some horrid gaucherie in dress or manner or both, that I must select bridesmaids, as I am half afraid that George does the bride (for he is infatuated enough to think me handsome) with large reference to externals. As for George, if Cupid is not blind, there is certainly *something* the matter with his eyes.

Mother says we must go into the city for the dress. Polly Meekham means well, but is hardly adequate to the occasion. I am sorry, for I know it will try her. Polly is rather an artisan than an artist. So large a part of the trousseau can be bought ready-made that this will greatly relieve the fuss of getting it all together,

George thinks he will have, as groomsmen, two Yale classmates of his, Frank Washburn and Philip Livingstone. I shall take for bridesmaids, my two Wellesley classmates, Bessie Winchester and Anne Morgan.

XII.

SEPTEMBER 14.

Sybil and I had a charming row on our small river yesterday. As she has the daintiest little cedar shel', just large enough for two, and spends no little time on the stream, she is glad of company. And water, in any shape or quantity, has a chasm for me. Ever since I heard lectures on it at college, as one of the elements of nature, I have looked at it with a fresh interest. That it should be so hard in its inelasticity as not to be compressible by any force, yet so soft as to yield to the touch as quickly as air, seems wonderful. Then, that a stream, if defiled, runs itself clear, in a few miles, is a great moral lesson for us. And, to my fancy, no landscape is perfect without water. It is not representative of this terraqueous globe of ours.

Sybil's oars, muffled with their leathern shields, worked so silently that they seemed listening for us to talk. As we glided noiselessly between the banks there was nothing wanting but—George, to fill up the pleasure of the hour.

Sybil has been reading every book about the other life that she could lay her hands on. "The Physical Theory of Another Life," "Philosophy of a Future State," "Gates Ajar," "Between the Gates," "Beyond the Gates," "Heaven Revealed," "The Unseen Universe," the "Awakening," "The Little Pilgrim in the Unseen"—she has devoured them all, with a score of others I do not remember. Dr. Bentley's sermon against being wise beyond what is written was evidently lost on her. She reminds me of a child on the steamer-wharf, in May, when tourists are embarking for Europe, who longs to be among them.

"I heard, the other day," she said, "a pleasant story about a minister whom his people had sent abroad for a rest. It occurred to them afterward that his wife ought to be with him. So, without notifying her husband, they made up another purse for her and put her in charge of a member of the church who was going over on business. He found the pastor's hotel in Paris and took her there, thickly veiled. From the clerk he learned the location of her husband's room, and that he was there. Then, going up with her, he left her standing in the corridor, while he greeted his minister and after a few minutes' chat with him, said :

" 'I have a lady-friend here, one of our church, whom you will be glad to see.' "

“ Upon which, without explaining why he took her to this private room, he went out, brought her to the threshold, and closed the door, from without, just as she stepped in and lifted her veil. Imagine the meeting ! Now, somewhat so I think of the recognitions and congratulations of those who pass to the life above and meet friends who have gone before.”

“ Then,” I said, wanting to draw her out, “ you believe in such recognitions ? ”

“ Believe ? ” she replied ; “ a doubt strikes me as the most preposterous of all things. The whole matter was summed up by that Scotch minister whose wife asked him :

“ ‘ John, do you think we shall know each other in heaven ? ’

“ ‘ To be sure, my dear. Do you think we shall be greater fools there than here ? ’

“ If we are immortal at all,” Sybil continued, “ I take it as pretty clear that we must carry with us, over there, our memories, with the other faculties. I suppose the main point, in our having, in any sense, the same body as here, is that of *continued identity*,—that we may be always and everywhere recognized as the same persons that we were here. Paul says (2 Cor. v. 1) that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we *have* a building of God, a house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens. We pass at once, from the one outward form into the other. Or, as some think, the soul may be endowed with the power of developing from within itself, its new frame. And, with our identity so preserved, what more absurd than that a man should meet there a wife, for instance, with whom he had lived for twenty years, and not know her? Paul certainly expected to know his converts. That we may present every man perfect in Christ, he says (Coloss. i. 28), 'clearly,' adds Dean Alford, 'at the great day of His appearing.' And if Paul should recognize them, why may not others know their friends, as well?"

"Most people seem to imagine that death is so fearful a shock as to break our whole being into fragments which we afterward gather up as we can. I see no necessity of any such demolition and reconstruction. I think we may expect to make ourselves at home very speedily in our new house. While I was in college, father and mother moved, with the family, from Winchester over to Dedham. I knew nothing of the new home, except that they were there. But I was not long, after I arrived and had them all around me, in getting domiciled. Why should I be any more so in one of the many mansions into which Jesus moved to prepare a place for me, and where I have already so many friends?"

Up to this point Sybil had rowed, while I steered. She seemed to suppose I couldn't row. But, partly to show her that I could feather a blade, as well as she, and partly to leave her wholly at ease to talk,—I so enjoyed what she had to say,—I insisted on exchanging places with her. We could pass each other in the toppling little craft only by running her ashore and pushing off again. For some little time after, neither of us said much. The slumberous stillness of the water and the woods, with no sound beyond that of a tree-toad or of the plunge of a frog in among the lily-pods, disposed us both to silent thought. I had in mind another recognition than that Sybil had mentioned—of the Master Himself. He has seemed to me, of late, so dear and intimate a confidant that it will be, by and by, a double joy to see Him enthroned in His majesty. It reminded me of Moore's "Lalla Rookh," that I had read some years ago. The princess, betrothed to the young King and journeying to his court, has with her a charming youth, a poet, to beguile the tedium of the way. He entertains her so delightfully and proves so congenial that she falls in love with him and dreads to meet her *fiancé*. The poor creature is distressed beyond measure. But, when, at length, she reaches the royal court, and the young King comes out to meet and greet her,

she is in ecstasy to find that *he* is the poet who, incognito, had been attending her and winning her heart. May I hope to see my Lord, who has attended me so lovingly along the way to his court, in some such wonderful recognition?

I broke from this reverie, which had lasted but a few minutes, to ask Sybil how she made the special friendships in the life above, that she had referred to, consist with a perfect love to all.

“Oh,” she said, “that is easy enough. Indeed you and I know it has been already done. There was, once in history, a certain sphere or circle, within which reigned the absolute perfection of heaven. It was, so to speak a fragment of that perfection, torn off and floated down to the earth. In all the ages there has been nothing like it. Among the angels, around the Throne, there is nothing freer from any shadow of a taint. John’s prediction of the Golden City, ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth,’ was here fulfilled on earth. Of course, I mean the life of Jesus. He alone, of all the millions of mankind, could demand of bitter critics, ‘Which of you convinceth Me of sin’? Now, with all this perfection, He had His special friends. Peter, James, and John He favored repeatedly by taking them where He invited none of their brethren; and John, over the other two even of them, was *the*

disciple whom Jesus loved. Clearly enough then, it is *absolutely right*, that, in heaven we should have special friends. Our Lord's love toward all the Twelve was so abounding and affecting as to leave no room for complaint or thought of it. So, I suppose, it will be among the redeemed."

"Yes," I said, shooting the boat into a charming nook under a tree and crossing the skulls in my lap, "but one who is not congenial to you must soon perceive the fact."

"Of course," she replied, "and one who has been there a few centuries less than you, and knows less, must perceive that. But he need not be unhappy about it. There are different types of both holiness and happiness. Are not a red and white rose both equally roses?"

"Souls that are equally congenial are, here on earth, often kept apart. One is rich, the other poor; one high in position, officially or socially, the other low. Did you never hear a remark from a perfect stranger to which something within you, answered at once. 'Ah! he and I are of one spirit!' It is like a glance of recognition from the opposite side of a crowded church. Our surroundings often freeze apart those who, when the grand melting time comes on, will promptly float together.

"For I suppose that, in the other life, every one

is *absolutely free*, as free as birds in the air. So each may seek communion with congenial souls. All these conventionalities, which separate those who ought to be in fellowship, will have been swept away forever."

I thought, as she spoke, of other hindrances than these external, social ones, to a perfectly congenial union. The soul is invested here in a personality that is, often, nearly *opaque*. It cannot clearly reveal itself. I do not know, for example, but Sybil, at the core of her being is as congenial to me as Susie. But over it spreads this coarser fibre—the result perhaps, of early training, that, in one way or another, so often annoys me, as to make me nervous and apprehensive of a shock. I trust the spiritual body will be transparent—or, at least, that the soul will be able to *make* it so, on occasion.

From the nook in which we were resting, a culvert passed in under the railway. As the tide was at the flood, there was just room within the arch to glide through without striking our heads or the sides of the boat. But this very restraint led into the larger liberty as we emerged on the inner side. The tide filled a picturesque recess, reaching away under the grand, old oaks and elms that towered above us with their groined arches as we glided between the grassy banks. Sybil had brought with

her a well-filled basket of goodies. So we pulled up the boat and spread a savory lunch under a maple. When all was ready, and she had said grace, we fell to discussing the other life again, over our sandwiches and jam and the coffee that she heated with a spirit lamp.

“If we recognize friends in the better world,” I asked, “how about friends whom we do not and cannot meet?”

“Yes,” she said, “the question that always arises—and a very painful one. How can we, haunted by the thought of the absent, enjoy those present? I suppose we are in no condition, on earth, to answer that question. It is impossible here to imagine, I take it, the joy with which we shall be drawn toward Him whom these absent ones have rejected. They are present to us now, and He is not. He will be present then, and they not.

“But I had a hint as to this sad matter, years ago, which has been useful to me ever since. You know my sister Mabel, Mrs. Harrison, who now lives in Philadelphia. At boarding-school she had a classmate—Sarah Cressman, I think, was the name—whom she dearly loved, but who had little sympathy with her religious aims and views. When Mr. Harrison, a whole-souled, young Christian lawyer he was, became engaged to Mabel,

Sarah took it very hard. She had not the grace to rejoice with them who do rejoice, and she couldn't endure to see any one coming in to absorb so much of her friend's love. So, though Mabel strove hard to keep her, she steadily cooled till the friendship came to an end. Mabel regretted it, but—but—" she added, laughing, "you know how it was, Alice, for you have *been there*, and are now. She was so absorbed in her lover, and so inspired by the noble life to which he was inviting her, that she contrived to live through it without breaking her heart. You see the point?"

"Yes," I said, "I do." With George incessantly in my thought, I was just in condition to see it. I can imagine that He Who is Chief among ten thousands and the One altogether lovely, may, in the glory of his presence, fill and thrill the soul. And another thing I see—that I must take my risk, after all, and invite Sybil to be one of my bridesmaids.

We had a charming float down the river homeward, and ran the boat into the boat-house just as the first stars were beginning to light up for the night.

XIII.

SEPTEMBER 20.

We had a funny time at the Sewing Circle yesterday. Mrs. Bentley, Sybil, young Mrs. Daskam and I happened to be together for a while, in the same corner of the ladies' parlor. I have been learning more about Mrs. Daskam, lately, than I ever knew before, and find her something of a character. Though she is not yet twenty-five, I doubt whether we have an octogenarian in town, who is her match for dread of innovation. I meet people, cautious and timorous as to some things, who are bold and progressive enough as to others—like a house that is moss-grown in spots, and in spots freshly repaired. But the conservatism is spread all over Mrs. Daskam. I have not yet seen a point that has escaped. There is not a bat in her father's old garret, or an owl in the woods, that is more disgusted with any new light. Some say she was born so—that, four or five months before her arrival in this mundane sphere, her mother was ter-

ribly frightened by a runaway horse, and that the daughter's timidity is due to that. But by common report, her hysterical fear of things now runs back much farther for its source. One story is that it sprang from a covetous old Tory—though not then called such—in colonial times, who curried favor with the Royal Commissioners and feathered his nest, by always opposing the steady bent of his countrymen toward self-government. Anyway, all agree that it is due to heredity. Each generation has hung so heavy a weight of caution on the lineage, as to make it really wonderful that the lineage should have staggered along down to Mrs. Daskam's time, and that she should have come into being at all. Her maternal grandfather walked the streets in cocked hat and small clothes and shoe-buckles, when every one else had discarded them; and, when obliged, at last, to lay them by, he looked them over often, in the drawer, with a rueful face, almost in tears.

But environment has set as many lions in her way as heredity. Her parents cling to their rickety, old colonial domicile, that has been honeycombed by the rats, and, on a windy day, whistles and shrieks at every door and casement, though they are abundantly able to build anew. I doubt whether a piece of furniture in the house is of less than fifty years' standing. They prize every

rheumatic, old chair and bedstead as a liquor-dealer does the dingiest, mustiest cask of wine in his cellar. Their pictures and books are all antiquated. They insist that, in going back toward mediæval times, they leave an age of pinchbeck and veneering and varnish for one of solidity and honesty. So, from her infancy, Mrs. Daskam has breathed conservatism in every room of the dwelling. Even in babyhood, they say, she carried a scared look at the world into which she had come, and, like the Wild Huntsman of the legend, with his head on his shoulders face backward, seemed wishing she could return to nonentity. If she had done so, she would have fulfilled the prophecy that a child should die a hundred years old.

Of course, as to the matter of new opinions or practices, she is a young woman after Mrs. Bentley's own heart. Of course, too, she was startled when the minister's wife announced a new case of alarming heresy.

"Don't you think Matilda Drummond actually asked her brother James, on his death-bed, last Thursday, to carry her love to their mother and their sister Aurelia, in heaven!"

"Well," said Sybil, quietly, "what of that?"

"What of that?" cried Mrs. Daskam, more shocked, if possible, I thought, by Sybil's coolness

than by Matilda's presumption, "a great deal of that! Where in the Bible can you find a syllable to authorize such a thing!"

"I do not remember anything to forbid it," replied Sybil.

"Why," demanded Mrs. Bentley, "could a man intrude into the Holy of Holies, except at the peril of life? And did that compare with heaven for sanctity?"

I saw on Sybil's face a ripple of amusement at this logic. But she replied only:

"Matilda didn't intrude. She merely stood outside, and asked that the message be delivered if it might."

Mrs. Bentley and Mrs. Daskam both know very well there isn't a more loyal, Christian family in town than the Drummonds. The departures of the mother and sister seemed to open channels between earth and heaven, through which a celestial atmosphere has been flowing in and around them, and they have breathed it ever since. They appear to me able almost to see through the veil. Somehow, with part of the family here, and part there beyond, the River of Death is bridged for them—like a light span, in a great park, thrown over a stream, both sides of which belong to one, undivided tract.

"But such doings as this," said Mrs. Daskam,

“are just the way to bring in Spiritualism, and you know what work *that* makes !”

“Well,” smiled Sybil, “it will be time enough to deal with Spiritualism when that appears among us. Messages, like this of Matilda, to departed friends, I have known sent by devout Christian people before. What is there unnatural about them ? I had a lesson, years ago, from our Nellie, when she was a little tot, about three years old. It was just after grandfather’s death. In one of his bureau-drawers there were various things that he had carried about him ; and, in rummaging there, one day, she found his glasses.

“There now !” she cried, holding them up, “danpa’s done to heaven ’thout his specs ! What’ll he do ?”

Uncle John was lying dangerously sick in the house at the time, and Nellie soon made her way to his bedside, with the glasses in hand.

“Are you doin’ to die ?” she whispered softly.

“I don’t know, my child,” answered uncle, turning his eyes toward her.

“Well, if you *do* die, are you goin’ to heaven ?” she asked.

“I hope so,” he said.

“Den, if you are,” proceeded Nellie, in a business-like way, as if sending a package to a neigh-

bor, "here's grandpa's specs. Won't you take 'em along to him?" *

A ripple went over Mrs. Bentley's solemn face, as Sybil added :

"Now, I think the child, in her queer fancy, had a more sensible notion of the nearness and accessibility of heaven than many an older head."

"But," said Mrs. Bentley, "this kind of talk seems to me like trifling with the awful solemnity of the other world."

"I don't see that the other world is one bit more solemn or sacred than this," replied Sybil. "It belongs to the same Father—was prepared by the same hand. Our friends over there are as dependent on Him, every moment, for continuance in righteousness as are we. In fact this is, at one point, a far more momentous world than that. For this seems to be the 'Valley of Decision,' in which multitudes stereotype their characters and so fix their destinies."

"Why, it seems to me frivolous," cried Mrs. Bentley, "to make so little of the dreadful secrets of eternity!"

"Well," persisted Sybil, "I have no great objection to old fashions in general"—at which, remembering how she dresses, we all laughed—"but

* A true incident in the life of a young relative of the author. It afterward appeared in print.

I think this old fashion of making the home that Jesus has prepared for us so ghostly and appalling a place is all conventional and morbid and unscriptural. I don't believe we are to be in any continual spasms of ecstasy, or convulsions of feeling of any sort. I expect that, when we have settled into our several lines of duty there, it will be the most natural and orderly place imaginable. Why should not any one, so disposed, send a message of love to a friend who has gone before?"

"With no reason to think it will ever reach him, groping in the dark?" asked Mrs. Bentley.

"There is at least no proof that it will not," rejoined Sybil. "If you had a brother traveling in Europe, and were not sure of his address, or of any reply, wouldn't you write, doing the best you could toward communication? There would be a pleasure in the mere attempt. It appears to me a miserable weakness, this putting the other life so far away—so utterly out of our range. 'Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven,' says the Lord. And, as to our greatest treasure, these dear pioneers going on before, He *compels* us to fulfill His own direction. We *have* to lay them up in heaven. 'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' So human nature works. When my brother Steve bought some lots in a western city, where he has never been even yet,

my ! what a new interest he took in that place ! He hunted up the latest gazetteer, and subscribed for a newspaper published there and cut out all he saw about the place from other papers,—his whole soul went after his treasure. The Lord knew how our thoughts follow our investments. Though the Bible withholds full knowledge of the other world, that we may not become too far absorbed in it, we are encouraged to get the most vivid and familiar view of it we can. Why does Jesus speak of ‘a place,’ and talk of the ‘many mansions’ ? Why do we hear of angels as ministering spirits, going back and forth continually, of course, between this world and the other, on loving errands, if not to imply that the other is near us, almost within our touch ? And, if they minister to us, why should not the friends also, who loved us while here ? And why should they not be near enough to receive our greeting ?”

“Now,” continued Sybil, “I happen to know Matilda pretty well. She is not only a most earnest Christian girl, but one eagerly longing after her mother. She said to me lately :

“‘You cannot imagine how near and dear to me she seems. I cry out after her. Sometimes I write my feeling, as if in a letter to her.’

“Then she turned to her desk, and handed me a paper, saying :

“ ‘There is what I wrote, the other day.’

“Oh, here it is in my pocket now. I borrowed it.” And Sybil read :

“O mother dear ! how I wish you *could* speak to me ! I know you love me as deeply as ever. I know you would answer me if it were best. How sweet it will be when we can speak face to face, But O it seems so long to wait ! Pray to our Father for me that I may have patience.”

“Why !” cried Mrs. Bentley, breathlessly. “That is nothing but Catholic prayers of the saints for us, outright !”

“Yes,” said Sybil, quietly, “I know it. But it came out of her heart, not from her head, as a dogma. I am not going to believe the Lord was offended.”

“Well, well !” said the old lady, “what will all this come to ? How much farther do you expect to carry it ?”

Then, evidently feeling that she had a duty of discipline, and going on, in a sterner tone, she added :

“You have brought in all sorts of heretical notions, Miss Martin, among our young people, and are turning them farther and farther away from the faith. These fine fancies will save no sinner. They would lull souls to sleep in their sins. And spreading such false doctrine, you take on yourself a fearful responsibility.”

Her air was that of a woman who felt called upon to bear down her listener with the weight of authority and crush the evil in the seed. She was never more mistaken in her life. Sybil was roused as I have hardly ever seen her before. It was not anger. I have seen her annoyed—fretted with ripples on the surface. But there is too much of her, she has too much weight, to be really carried away by any gust of passion. It was the deep earnestness of one who deplored what she accounted a great and disastrous mistake, and was resolved to tell the truth in regard to it.

“Well, Mrs. Bentley,” she said, “if any young person among us has gained more cheerful views of the gracious Father of us all than have sometimes been held, I am heartily glad of it and quite ready to bear the responsibility. I believe, in my soul, that, if he should speak aloud as to this matter He would say, in substance, ‘Why could ye not better understand and set me forth to men? I have yearned in love toward every creature I have made. I sent My Son to save them. When any perish it is because they will—are bent upon it. I would have all men to be saved. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help—not thy destruction. My invitation to life is wide as the world. Whosoever will may come.’

No mother ever loved her babe as have I the guiltiest soul on earth.' ”

Sybil threw such tenderness, as well as earnestness into her voice, that Mrs. Bentley's eyes began to moisten. She had never seen matters in this light before. The idea that she might possibly have misrepresented the Lord she revered so deeply struck her with a sudden pang. Yet, she was not to be revolutionized so promptly in her opinions. She stood her ground, but the conversation gradually frayed out till the time arrived for the adjournment of the Circle.

XIV.

SEPTEMBER 23.

I joined the Church, yesterday. For some time, from various reasons, I have thought of doing it. One reason—to be frank, as I always mean to be in this journal—was that, as George is already a member, my outward life might, like my inner, blend with his. I came up from girlhood with certain queer ideas about the church. I thought of it as a kind of depository that garnered the sanctity from successive souls that had sojourned in it and finally gone heavenward. The chief bulk of their holiness, I supposed, they carried with them up to paradise. But I imagined that the long succession of them, domiciled for years in the earthly courts, and filled and surcharged with the hallowed substance, could not but drop some share of it around them. These deposits made up an accumulation which, if I joined the membership, I should imbibe or inhale, or, in some other way, be unconsciously incorporating in my inner life. Another of these wild vagaries was, that the ideals

which these holy souls had been holding before themselves, still floated about the precincts, and would somehow "allure to heaven and lead the way." But, I supposed, I must have already ripened well on toward perfection before I could venture up among those whom I saw, from time to time, gathered at the Communion table.

I have learned, however, that the church is only a training-school for very imperfect Christians,—that the growth in grace is to be not preparatory, but co-ordinate with, and part of, the church-life itself. Yet there remains, from my old fancy of an accumulation of holiness, the idea of the church as a conservatory from the chill of the world, in which one breathes a more genial atmosphere and is cherished by the sympathy and counsel of the brotherhood.

There was an illusion that I should somehow increase my responsibility by a public profession. This, Dr. Bentley has effectually dispelled. He shows me that I cannot increase responsibility—that it already covers every power with which I am endowed. I can only acknowledge the obligation under which I now am, and go into surroundings favorable for discharging it.

But, after all, I found myself halted, for a while, on the threshold. The church has a creed that bristles with dogmas, to some of which I can-

not subscribe, and others I do not understand. The fathers, who drew it up, seemed so anxious to protect the flock, that they feared to admit a new member, simply on evidence that he was a disciple. But Dr. Bentley told me I could take the creed "for substance of doctrine." As nearly as I could make out, I accepted the essence of the document, without committing myself to everything implied in the letter.

Dr. Bentley, though somewhat mediæval theologically, by no means lives in such constant dread of heresy, as his good wife. During our discussion of the creed, I drew him to my favorite theme, our relation to the departed. He holds that our love to them may effect a wonderful uplift on ourselves. And he has a happy way of showing it. Before our Lord's death, he said, the apostles' devotion to Him was in a degree a sentiment. In a way they were sincere; but they expected to derive much profit from Him. He was to be a mighty champion of Israel, a conqueror, a king, and reign in tenfold the glory of David or Solomon. They themselves were to be the grandees of his court. They fell out with James and John. They never got the better of all this folly till the Lord had been crucified and buried and had risen and ascended to heaven. But then, what a change! No more of this chase after bursting bubbles, no

more low greed of place and pelf, but self-renunciation, brave bearing of hardship and persecution,—the very spirit of the ministering angels.

Somewhat so, now, it is with our love for friends remaining and departing. While they linger here, all earthly elements alloy our affection. We hope for some advantage from them. We contract faults from them. We mislead them into faults of our own. But, when the mortal in them has put on immortality, how these impurities are purged from our love! They drew us laterally before; but it is vertically now, up toward the celestial heights. There is no self-interest to be served by them now, no room for a questionable motive, no taint to be either given or received. Our love ascends into the invisible, as turbid water evaporated by the sun and rising in pure, unseen vapor, heavenward. No man can cling, in his love, to the redeemed and glorified without sharing somewhat in their spirit.

SEPTEMBER 30.

I went over with Sybil to Wellesley, yesterday. As we are both alumnæ, and the term began, about a fortnight ago, we wanted to see the dear, old place again. It was my last visit as Alice Herbert. We enjoyed it with only a kind of somber pleasure. With classmates scattered over

the land, and some beyond the sea, we had a ghostlike feeling, flitting around there, as being about half in the body. We seemed to ourselves peering out from the past, that is already growing misty, on the busy young undergrads.

As the 'bus rolled in by the Lodge, at the gate, however, the grounds seemed as delightful as of old. Indeed, viewing them now as a whole, while we used, in college-days, to be absorbed chiefly in one building or section, I think we appreciated them more fully than ever. No wonder that the dear founder selected them, at first, as an Eden for his boy. The father forbade any personal memento of himself to appear on the premises. *Stat nominis umbra*. Nowhere visible, he pervades, like the air, unseen, every building and every lawn.

We were charmed anew by hill and valley succeeding one another. It was as if the whole tract had been rolling in huge billows, and the Master had said, again, "Peace! be still," arresting them before they could settle to their level.

Hardly more than a breathe of air was astir. Every tree seemed whispering, "How are you? What strangers you have been of late!"—but softly, not to disturb the sturdy-hours. A leaf or two were floating down, here and there, sparse drops before the golden and saffron rain of a few

weeks hence. The robins and bluejays evidently were disgusted at the raw weather we had, for a week or two, till yesterday, and are getting ready to migrate. The contankerous little English sparrows were, of course and as usually, in a fierce fight. They seem to have adopted Hobbes' doctrine that war is the natural state of all animated creatures.

Along the lake shore were the boats, drawn up and awaiting their owners, while the dainty spoon-oars stood in a sheaf on the veranda. And the lake, itself, after having been so lately vexed and fretted by the little navy, lay at rest, a Sleeping Beauty, among the hills.

We met with several of the Faculty, and Sybil was so full of the great event impending over me that she overflowed in whispers which brought me more congratulations than were quite agreeable. But I could not help feeling how grand a thing is an *institution*, that lives on from age to age, and becomes a sort of sound-conductor, through which the founders speak from the other world to generations yet unborn.

The pleasantest part of our visit to me was our delightful row on the lake, in Sybil's sister Eunice's boat. As the owner was busy in recitation, we had the beautiful little craft to ourselves. It is an ungrateful, hateful thing to say: but, with the

frankness I mean always to preserve in this journal, I must say that Eunice's room, on that particular occasion, was, to me at least, better than her company. I knew she would take little interest in the matter that has been on our minds of late, and which, as we rowed, in a leisurely way, over the mirror-like surface, soon came up again.

"This was very noble in the founder," said Sybil—"this prohibiting any memento of himself here. The whole college is, of course, despite himself, however, his magnificent memento. In a nobler sense than that of the inscription on Wren's tomb in St. Paul's Church, one may say "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*" But, do you know, Alice, I think there is a deal more of attention paid, and money devoted, to graves and tombs than the departed would desire or the Lord would approve."

"Yet," said I, "you think it is a natural sentiment that does honor to the frame through which a dear friend has smiled upon us and spoken words of love?"

"Yes—to a degree," she replied, as she thoughtfully watched the drip of an oar, "but it is carried to such excess! Now, I hear that the Robinsons intend to put up a costly shaft to their husband and father, in their lot at Mount Auburn. Why should they imprison so great a sum in

marble, while so many poor among the living need it? It almost shocks me that one departed should be compelled to lay his dead hand on this live and active sum of money and virtually kill it. Somehow it seems to me almost like murder."

"And yet," I said, "barring such extravagance, the grave of a friend is, in some sense, the point of connection between him and us."

"Hardly even that," rejoined Sybil. "What is *there*, but the decaying body he once inhabited and has done with forever? If I had a woollen skirt, so bygone and moth-eaten into a heap of rags, that it could never be beaten clean, would you expect me to take much interest in it?"

"Well, that *is* a queer notion," said I.

"You will call it fanciful," she added, "but the predetermined order of nature is that the body should go back to dust. And our dear ones look, not backward into charnel-houses but, forward to the glorious career on which they are entering. 'Let the dead Past bury its dead,' we may be sure, is their motto. Our Pilgrim Fathers have been much berated for their neglect of graves—smoothing them over that the Indians might not count them and discover the loss of fighting men. But I suspect their intense spirituality had quite as much to do with it—their vivid sense of the

soul as the real being, which is no longer concerned with the corpse."

"But the resurrection," I said—

"Yes," she replied, "I expected that. But, whatever may be true in regard to it, I suppose neither you nor I would say that anything which goes into the grave, or into the sea, or is devoured, it may be, by wild beasts, will pass into the spiritual body. I know the Jews held that the bone called Luz, would be transferred unchanged, from one body to the other. But I never heard of scalpel or microscope that had discovered it. Our friends, I believe, care far less for their graves than do we. The hymn calls them 'the shrouded and the lonely.' They are not shrouded. They are not lonely. They are up and away, in glad fellowship, in the social life of heaven. 'Shadows here, authenticating substance there.' They are, I believe, a hundredfold more ardent and eager and full of enthusiasm than we, though doubtless calm and self-possessed, in grand enterprises that absorb them.

"Our Lord meant, I think, to make the impression that the other life is near and easy of access; by leading so many to and fro, between that sphere and ours. The son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus, the saints who arose at His crucifixion, and His own promise, 'I, if I

go away will come again and receive you unto myself'—these all look like a trampling back and forth over the bourne, to tread it down and unite the two worlds. If we had friends who had gone to live abroad and who, after wearing the foreign costume, should return to wear our dress awhile and then depart again and resume the other, we should begin to feel somewhat familiar with matters over there."

"But," said I, as I almost steered the boat aground, being lost in our subject, "even if they do not frequent their graves, you think they visit *us*?"

"Certainly!" she cried. "If angels are ministering spirits, so much more may we look for that service from friends who have so loved us here. I believe that other world to be a *natural* world. People do there, as freely as we do here, what they wish to do. That, I suspect, is equally true of the lost, and is one of the most fearful sources of their misery. But, as to the redeemed, why should we doubt that they return to them on whom, for years, their hearts were set in the dearest ties? I suspect we are to them what a magnet is to steel."

"But what can they do for us?" I asked. "We are certainly not conscious of any benefit from them."

“No,” she replied. “Neither are we, from the angels as ministering spirits. Hardly from the Infinite Spirit Himself. Probably we shall discover, by and by, a thousand benefits from them, of which we have no suspicion now. A Quaker in Philadelphia, who had helped off many a fugitive slave, was threatened by the roughs of the city. And, night after night, a large body of colored men, armed to the teeth, were on guard, without his knowledge, around his house. We can no more extract from our characters and lives all we owe to *our* unseen friends than you can extract five months’ of sunshine from a ripened peach. Yet it is all there.”

“But heaven is so far away,” I objected—“such a journey for them to reach us!” We were skirting along the shore of the beautiful, private grounds across the lake.

“How do you know that?” asked Sybil. “The centre, the Throne, may be immeasurably so. But the celestial hosts are perhaps as a vast army that has its headquarters at one point, while the brigades and regiments and foragers are distributed over a great region. And the great region, in this case, may be—the universe. But let that be as it may. Put the domicile of the redeemed as far away as you please. Distance is, to be measured, not by the number of leagues, but by the time it takes to

pass it. San Francisco, before the Pacific Railroad was a month away, and now it is only a week. With what speed the spiritual body may fly from one point to another is inconceivable. The home of the blessed may be both beyond the stars and only a moment away from us."

We had advanced so far in our talk, when something occurred which filled me with perfect horror. It will be a lurid spot in my memory as long as I live. It has been hard for me to go on so far in my account of the day without mentioning it, and yet I hate to refer to it, even now. Though the storm, so to speak, that raised the fearful commotion has gone by, the waves are still heaving in me, and I feel the tremor of them in wielding my pen.

We were passing a dense grove, on the opposite side of the lake from the college, when Sybil suggested that we should land and take a short stroll in the woods. As there would be no tide^{*} rising to float the boat away, we left her with the prow just touching the sand, and the stern in much deeper water. In that, as we afterward found, a merciful Providence was protecting us.

The wood being dense, and sunset near, we could see no object clearly at any great distance. At a point where the path was narrow and I a little in advance, we caught sight of two moving fig-

ures, a little farther in shore. They seemed at first hardly more than shadows flitting through the woods. Whether they were men or women we could not tell, and, as they did not appear to be moving toward us, we saw nothing to fear. But Sybil, who was more wary and watchful than I, noticed that, as they apparently caught sight of us, they quickened their pace. She suspected, too, they went parallel with the shore, rather than toward us, partly to avert suspicion and partly to turn presently and rush down between us and the water.

Instantly, shouting, "To the boat, Alice, for your life!" she led the way, in which I was prompt to follow. At the moment, the two horrid prowlers dashed from the wood to the water's edge and attempted to intercept us. Fortunately, to lull suspicion, they had gone too far up the lake for their purpose. But they came toward the boat with fearful speed. If we had not, feeling that we were in a life or death struggle, run as I never ran before, and hope never to be forced to run again, they would have headed us off. They were doubtless expecting that we should be delayed in pushing off. They were within a rod or two, when both of us, with a great bound, landed in the boat, clear astern, one tumbling over the other, and the faithful little refuge, under our

momentum, lifted her prow and floated out into deep water. I never conceived before how grateful it is possible to be to an inanimate thing. We sat up, too much exhausted to take the oars, panted out, "Thank God!" and looked our pursuers in the face. Not a word was spoken on either side. We ourselves were too breathless to speak. It was a horrible pantomime, in which actions spoke louder than words could possibly have spoken. I never saw, in a human face before, so hideous a mingling of foul passion and baffled brutality. I can see, now, how a soul, inspired by the Evil One himself, can disfigure the human features. We both felt like falling on our knees in the boat, to give thanks for deliverance. And as we took up the oars and tiller ropes, and the men turned back into the wood, it seemed like the parting of souls for eternity.

XV.

SEPTEMBER 30.

I am utterly miserable. I shouldn't have thought it possible that I could be plunged, out of such happiness as I have generally enjoyed since George put the ring on my finger, into such a depth as this. And the causes of it are chiefly in myself. Yet they are not all responsible causes. For one thing, I have not, even yet, recovered from that scene on the lake. I shudder, every few moments, with the thought, What if those creatures had reached the boats as soon as we? The fact that they did not—that I am safe—affords no comfort great enough to counterbalance the horror. The covering seems to have been torn off my whole nervous system, and, from head to foot, I am a palpitating network of irritations. One night, since the affair, I had all possible shapes of goblins, imps, and ogres, trooping through my dreams and grinning at me. And they were like a child's toy-book with a hole cut through the leaves, clear to the last, so that a sailor, a judge, a

robber, all appear with the same face. These shapes, every one, had the features of the two wretches who chased us to the boat.

Then, for another thing, we have had no decently good cook since Marguerite left us. Father and Will cannot see why mother and I do not manage things better. Every day there is some fresh annoyance. The kitchen is a perfect torture-chamber, with a new contrivance for laceration once or twice in every twenty-four hours. All this draws out of me an amount of peevishness and bitterness which I did not know myself well enough to suppose I had in me. Where is the line at which innocent nervousness passes into responsible ill temper? If there is such a line, I believe I have been leaping, back and forth, over it, like an acrobat, day after day.

Then, too, mother has been not quite well—not exactly a model of the patience of the saints. She has seen my faults with a marvelous perspicacity. I notice that, when she is out of sorts, her conscience is wonderfully quickened to “the duty of being faithful,” as she calls it, to me. She hews to the line. She lays judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. They said, of old, that Nemesis was shod with wool. But my dear mamma is after me, on these occasions, in anything but silence.

Last evening I had been berating Nora about her leaden bread. Mother overheard me, and, when I came out into the back-parlor, she seemed inspired with a sudden sympathy for Nora. She should think I would be ashamed to storm at a poor friendless girl in that fashion. How would I feel if I were in Nora's place? etc. I was retorting that the cook knew better, had several times done better, and was telling mother saucily that she was more moved by vexation at me than by concern for Nora, when George was ushered into the front parlor. As the gas, where we were, was not lighted and the room was dim, I supposed the sliding doors, between us and him, were shut. I thought, too, that I was speaking in very moderate tones. But, in the midst of it, mother twitched my sleeve and pointed to the doors. Then I saw, to my horror, that they were an inch ajar, and that George must have heard all I said. Of course I dreaded terribly the effect upon him. I felt that he had *detected* me in a very different spirit from any I had ever before shown him. At once I was sick at heart. He would think me double-faced. He would count me a hypocrite. What could I do? The very attempt to explain would show me conscious of guilt. Then, my pride rose into a defiant mood. All sorts of contending feelings were up in arms at once.

I had met George before in the glad unconsciousness of a child. The thought of any calculation to please him had not occurred to me. And now this stooping to the low level of expediency, of planning to avert his displeasure, had in itself a demoralizing effect. For the first time in my life I was not more than half glad to see him at all. That fact struck me through with alarm. I have asked myself since, why I feared meeting him. I suppose it was because the interview itself implied a flood of love on each side, a meeting of the tides in a glad commotion. And I was in so different a mood from that, just now, that I fairly dreaded the shock of the change.

I cannot tell how I suffered. I almost wished that I had never come into life, or that I might go out of it. Mortified, humiliated, unfit to meet George, I was yet by no means melted or subdued, in any wholesome way.

I went in to see him, expecting to find a lowering cloud on his face. I had read a dreadful story of a young man who was about to offer himself to a girl, but who, on the stoop, before he had rung the bell, hearing her abuse her mother, left, not to return; and it was in my mind as I entered the room.

But, whatever George had heard, he betrayed no coolness, but greeted me with as warm a kiss

as the first he ever gave me. The fact is, he not only had a deal more of equilibrium than I, but had heard of the affair on the lake and may have ascribed my tones to nervous excitement.

But worse was to come. If I had only had the presence of mind to tell him in what a flutter I was—I needn't have referred directly to my scolding mother—and thrown myself on his sympathy, all would perhaps have been well. But, partly from the want of that, and partly from my stupid pride, I must have appeared at my worst. That horrid moment was a drain into which all the bad elements in me ran down together. I was wicked enough, hateful enough, goodness knows; but certainly the show I made of myself, then and there, no more fairly represented me than a kitchen sink represents the rooms of a house.

George had bought tickets for a philharmonic concert and wanted me to go. There again I was a fool. My miserable condition of the nerves made me feel more like going to bed than to the finest concert ever given. But, without giving this reason, I declined in so capricious a way that George was surprised and insisted, somewhat. In any better mood I should have seen that it was the persistency of love. He thought I would enjoy the concert. But I was so miserably out of

harmony with him that I could see nothing but a show of authority. So, what I ought to have accounted a loving invitation, and met as lovingly, I took for an ugly collision of wills, and made it harsh and unfeeling. George was, for the time, deeply wounded. His call was short and his manner taciturn. He left without offering me a kiss, and I rushed up to my room half distracted, in a flood of tears. There I am now.

What am I to do? Is there a more wretched, a more miserable, being than I on earth? I have grown old a year within an hour or two. George must have gone to his hotel, feeling that he had seen into me deeper than ever before—and seen nothing good. Everything is in utter confusion for me, and all black as midnight. When I came into my room, the closet-door was open, and I looked in, a moment, at my wedding-dress. It seemed a mocking spectre, whispering, in every rustle of the folds, that it *was not for me*. The more I admired it the sharper the pang it gave me. As I have just closed the door and turned away, the dress is as if departing from me irrevocably.

OCTOBER 1—EVENING.

I passed a wretched night. The wakeful hours were the least miserable, for the visions in my

troubled sleep were crowded with horrors. I saw George cleared of the last trace of sympathy for me. He was rubbing his hands, in great glee that he had found me out, before it was too late and he was tied to me for life. He told me he would take the ring again at my earliest convenience—that he could probably find a better use for it. Then, suddenly, I was in the midst of friends, all staring in pity at me as a woe-begone creature.

When my distress awoke me, I lay thinking how George would probably release himself. Not quite so heartless as he appeared in the dreams, he would take some less violent, but not less sure way. He would begin to be troubled with ill-health, and deeply regret that the wedding must be postponed. That would push it off for the nonce, and he could easily devise new evasions and delays. Of course my nervous weakness was at the bottom of these apparitions and terrors; but they were none the less real to me for that. And what I knew of the beauty of George's character, and the treasure I was losing, added a new pain to all I endured. If I had discovered anything really unworthy in him, it would have relieved the situation, though without blunting the sharpness of the disappointment. But there was no relief from that direction. The more I re-

flected as I lay in my gloom, the more noble he appeared, and the more absolutely mine the fault for the breach between us.

Before morning I concluded that I could not live so, much longer, and decided what I would do. Then I asked, again and again, with tears, for strength from above, and finally secured a little quiet sleep.

This morning I sent, by a messenger, this note to George,

OCTOBER 1.

“MY DEAR GEORGE:

“*Please* call and see me to-day, as soon as you conveniently can. I am in deep distress.

“Yours as ever,

“ALICE.”

I hardly expected to see him—he is so busy—till afternoon. But the dear fellow had no sooner read my note than he dropped everything and hastened over. I saw him, through the parlor-window, coming, and it put me in such a commotion that I was afraid I should betray my weakness.

The cordial kiss with which he greeted me took off from me what seemed the weight of the earth. When I asked him if he could forgive my treatment of him last evening, he folded me to his

breast and answered over and over again with his lips,—though not with words. None of those were needed. I felt lifted out of an abyss of horrors into paradise. I thought at first I would not tell him what I had undergone. His tenderness seemed to forbid referring to anything so dismal. But in spite of myself, enough of it came out to move him more deeply with concern for me than he had been moved last evening, with annoyance.

O how I delighted in the largeness of his nature! This disturbance, which has gone down through my whole being, was hardly more to him than a breeze through a forest is to the mountain beneath it. I thought, because he offered me no kiss, he was deeply wounded. The truth is, it seems, he feared I was too much irritated to welcome it, and so did not venture. And I found too, that, though he appeared so calm and leisurely this morning, he had just left an important case, into which he was plunged, with his law-books around him, and all its perplexities crowding upon him. I thought I knew George. But I found I had only struck a gold vein leading into a great mine.

And how sweet a rest I enjoyed, on his shoulder! In the due order of things, as I supposed, the tumults of the soul are to be quieted by first giving the body a long repose. But it was other-

wise, this morning. His magnanimity and tenderness so soothed and refreshed the soul that I felt stronger in my whole frame. My nervous palpitation was calmed. I wondered what had become of the tremor that seemed to be shaking out my life.

Though George showed no haste to be gone, I knew I ought not to keep him from his office. Twenty minutes before, I could not have believed it possible to rise from my abyss into anything like pleasantry. It would have appeared audacious. But now, with eyes swimming in tears of joy, and three or four kisses, I said "There is the door! but don't you fail to come again at seven!"

In the evening I asked him how it was that any such misunderstanding could arise between two persons who thoroughly love each other.

"Oh," he said, "unfortunately that is plain enough. The body is to the soul, what too many a member of Congress is to his constituents, a very poor representative. Like him it has too many interests of its own to look after. Bad digestion and weak nerves make a show of ill-nature for which the soul is hardly responsible. Looks that are only earnest are supposed to be angry. Tones that mean pleasantry are taken for mockery. Weary attitudes are charged to indifference. Then, too, words are so poor a vehicle,

often, for thought. They break down under the weight of it and convey only half our meaning, or else, when the soul is on fire, they drag heavily, like Pharaoh's chariots without the wheels. Again, under nervous excitement, they go faster and farther than we intended. They involve us in their own perplexities and only darkly hint our thought. How often I have wished that words were like the notes of a musical score! The notes make no false impressions. Every one of them means precisely one sound—can mean no other. Musicians of a hundred different lands and languages would all sing or play them alike. An able lawyer can hardly write his own will so as to prevent dispute over it; but there are no two opinions about the true rendering of the "Messiah" or the "Creation."

"And is that one reason," I asked "for our having so much music in heaven? Anyway, how sweet a hope it is that, by and by, the soul will have, in the body, a better servant!"

"Certainly it is," he said. "I infer as much from the very term, 'spiritual body.' As that new form is to be strong and incorruptible it will, of course, have no diseases or exhaustion, or troublesome nerve-centres which now are, too often, storm-centres. It will raise no clamor about any separate interest of its own. Paul says, you

know, 'Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.' That, I imagine, may mean that we shall have some far better way of communicating thought and feeling. Isaac Taylor supposes we may have a power of throwing open the interior life, precisely as it is, to any friend among the redeemed, and then, to preserve our individuality, may close it up again at pleasure. With so perfect a mutual understanding, how far better we can help one another in the study of truth and the culture of character! So too in discussion. What a waste of mental strength and time and temper there has been, in all the word-battles along the ages, simply because the disputants gave different meanings to the same word! We may well believe there will be none of that in the spiritual body."

"But," I said, "you wouldn't think waste of *time*—or duration—of much account, when we have a whole eternity of it from which to draw?"

"I am not so sure as to that," he replied. "You remember that, when our Lord had fed five thousand men, beside women and children, with a word, when He had shown that He could turn every stone on the planet into a loaf, in an instant, if He chose, He would allow no waste. 'Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.' It was like saving, by the cupful, the flood that goes

over Niagara. I am not so sure that He will expect us to waste the duration in eternity."

"But as to misunderstandings," I said, "I hope you and I need not wait to pass into the other world, that we may avoid them!"

"No, darling," he answered quickly, "there is a wonderful power in souls, to come through a close intimacy into a close harmony. Do you know, it has often been noticed that husband and wife gradually resemble each other, even in their looks? And, as spirit is probably more plastic than matter, how much closer may become the affinity of souls! If a needle, left in contact with a magnet, is soon magnetized itself, why should not one heart learn to respond to another? We have both learned something, I am sure, from this little affair of last evening. We shall be quicker to take each other's meaning. We shall each more tenderly bear with the other. And so our two lives will grow into one well-rounded whole."

It was with this sweet promise of the future that I parted from him at the door, and watched him till his retreating figure shrouded itself in the night.

XVI.

OCTOBER 14.

It is the last night of my single life. George has just left and I am here alone in my room. The moon is half full, and the stars are looking down in their golden beauty on the checkered spectacle of human joys and sorrows. Here, outside my window, are the stealthy shadows, lurking, like shapes of evil, and almost startling me with the thought that so much happiness must have some counterbalancing sorrow awaiting it. How slumberously the brook whispers, idling along! It has nothing to fear as it wanders, through the gloom, into the wood. How different from Sybil and me, in the forest by the lake! The higher we rise in the order of being, the greater become our perils.

What strange, weird figures the foliage takes, outlined against the sky! There is a face with a huge nose, and another with a projecting chin, in profile. Here is a dog's head and there a lion with open mouth. All things, in the magic of the moonlight, mold themselves into new shapes.

How hard and dry they would be if I could see nothing in them, more than the pictures they make on the eye!

What is to occur to-morrow forces me back to take myself in hand and look the object over thoughtfully. What have I done thus far in life? Immeasurably more important — what have I been? O my Father! how miserably unworthy I am of the brimming cup of blessing Thou hast put into my hand! Am I not deceiving George with false pretences? Am I worth a tithe of what he takes me for? He has idealized me all over. If he can manage to think such a face as mine handsome, in what a rosy glamor he must see the soul! How shall I ever arrive at what he supposes he sees in me already?

And what a crisis is this in my life! How completely I am throwing my happiness and hopes into the hands of another! Father and mother, it is true, have had these as fully in their keeping; but entrusting myself to them has been a life-long process. Or rather I had no part in bringing it about. But, to-morrow evening, I do it in a moment, of my own free motion. Why are such crises appointed to us? Why does not life flow on with as little change as that brook under my window? To compel us to take the whole life into view?—to steer and not drift? May there

not be some sort of crises in the next world, for us? I have commonly thought of life there, as running on, with an even current, through eternity. So we tone it down into our everlasting soliloquy within and monotony without. But what if we reach, occasionally, junctures and changes that are as great as to-morrow's event now seems to me, and then take new departures along new lines? An Eternity of existence would seem almost to *require* that.

But it is after ten. I must here close up so much of the record of Alice Herbert's life as this diary contains. So, as I turn off the light, farewell little room in which I have passed so many a happy hour! Farewell my desk at which I have written, and bureau at which so often I have dressed for the day! And bed, from which I have wandered off in strange adventures through dreamland, and pictures about the walls, and chairs and carpet—all farewell! Here closes up the first great chapter of my life, and to-morrow opens the second. Master! make that second more—far, far more—like Thine own!

PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO,
October 20.

I have brought my diary, in my trunk, on our wedding-trip, to note, while they are fresh in my

memory, some events of these days so momentous to me, and so replete with happiness.

The wedding was all I could desire. George's utter unselfishness and tender consideration have betrayed themselves in every word and act. We adopted so much of the Episcopal form as to kneel while Dr. Bentley laid his hands on our heads in prayer. I liked his words in handing the ring to George, to be placed on my finger: "Within this little circle may you find the horizon of a world of peace and joy! Give and receive this pledge of love as also a silent monitor to remind you of this evening's solemn vows, and a foretoken of of that more perfect and fully rounded and unbroken blessedness which shall endure, we trust, for you when the gold shall have become dim and the most fine gold changed!"

My angelic Susie was there, propped with pillows, looking on in her heavenly self-forgetfulness, and, as I thought, with a face already aglow in the light of the land into which she is slowly passing. Nothing in all the room, not even Dr. Bentley's prayer, gave me so strong an impression of a sanction from above, resting on our union, as did Susie's presence. I am thankful, beyond measure, that no slightest trace of her interest in George seems to have been suspected by any one but me. This is one secret that I shall

keep even from him—at least till she has passed away.

It was all, of course, delightful. If a woman could not enjoy her own wedding, where *would* she find a sunny spot in life? Yet, somehow, a sombre vein ran through it. Amidst all the wit and laughter and sparkle and effervescence of the scene, I had a feeling that I was skimming the surface of its profounder meaning—sailing a pleasure-boat over the deep. Yet, not for the world would I be without these thoughts. Great share of my self-respect would take its departure with them.

The guests threw handfuls of rice after us, as the carriage rolled away, dismissing us they knew not whither. Indeed, it was one of George's little fancies not to tell even me whither—beyond Albany. And I enjoyed it all the more. I felt the more absolutely his—that I was committing myself more unreservedly to him. There is a fascination for me in so breaking away from the routine of life and venturing off like a bird on the wing—while still sweetly conscious that we are not presumptuously tempting Providence. But are these days of such intense enjoyment quite up at the summit of the nobility of one's nature? Are they in perfect accord with "more blessed to give than to receive"? Not that the question

really troubles my conscience ; but I *am* glad to find that something like it has occurred to George—that we are in perfect harmony with each other. He has been asking himself whether he has quite a *right* to be as happy as he is. If enjoyment is only the foam of one's life, our experience, just now, seems to be all foam. May we be so much the more thorough for it in consecration when we return to the common round of life !

I was glad when I found George was taking me to this town of amazing growth. It reminds me of the palace in Milton's pandemonium that "rose like an exhalation." May it be put to better uses than that ! George says he has asked many people for an explanation of the swift increase of the city.

"O," they say, "this is the strategic point. There *must* have been a great city here."

But no one seems to have known that in advance. It is hindsight not foresight. Many thought such a city was somewhere afloat in the future ; but where it would anchor no one could conjecture. And, in guessing, scores, if not hundreds, made ruinous investments in lands at one point and another. George says that, though there are laws governing the movements of population, some of them are as mysterious as the laws of the weather.

Chicago started in the race in infancy when other cities were already full-grown, and it has grown as it ran. One of its competitors after another has, so to speak, thrown a patronizing look over its shoulder, at the stripling, then turned its head slowly as it saw the stripling abreast, and then—had no further occasion to look backward. “What manner of child shall this be?” is the question that all the nation has been asking, and is likely to ask more wonderingly, every decade, as the census comes out.

OCTOBER 21—SUNDAY EVENING.

We have heard a sermon to-day, on the text, “And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side.” “An angel,” said the preacher, “some thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of years of age, yet young and fresh as ever.” And the delightful subject was, “Perpetual youth in heaven.” George and I were, of course, deeply interested, it was just in the line of so much of our thought and conversation. We discussed the matter on our way back to our hotel and after we reached our room.

“As to that young man in the tomb,” I said, “I have always supposed that the angels, when appearing among men, assumed such forms as suited them. If so, nothing more could be in-

ferred from it than from a youthful mask that an old man might put on."

"But," replied George, "I doubt the correctness of what you have supposed. You remember that, when Elisha prayed the Lord to open his young friend's eyes (2 Kings vi. 17), he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots round about the prophet. I think it not unreasonable to infer that the angels *always* have outward forms. I judge that, when these appeared to men, they were not assumed for the occasion, but only that the souls' eyes of the men were opened to see what had been invisible. They were like a blind man, restored to sight, who perceives only what was around him before. There is no instance in the Bible, in which an angel, when appearing, has an aged look. They seem to show always the vigor and energy of youth."

"Then," said I, "you would make an angel or a redeemed saint to be, rather absurdly, young and old both."

"No—and yes," he answered. Your idea comes from our conventional notions. We have so long seen a grave face and bent form and slow steps connected with age, that nothing else seems becoming. But who ever thought that the wisdom and experience of age would hurt a young man, if he could have them? How fine a thing, we

often say, if a father could bequeath these, with his money, to his boy !

“ But how glorious, in the other life, to keep the eternal freshness of youth !—to have, so far forth, something of the immutability of God Himself ! to be gaining, from century to century, in breadth of view, in expansion of soul, in the power to achieve great ends, and yet be as buoyant and fresh, and keen in relish of all things grand and beautiful, at last as at first ! In childhood we tingled to our fingers’ ends, with delight in ‘ Robinson Crusoe ’ or the ‘ Arabian Nights,’ as we never can do now. It was a perpetual spring morning. There was always a foam on the top of the day and sweetening left at the bottom. We may *keep* our exuberance in the other life.”

“ You know, Alice,” he continued, as we sat by our window, looking down on the street, with its moving panorama of cars and carriages and pedestrians, “ how all things here are changing—how transient they are. It is the worm at the core of our enjoyments. I have read that, when George the Fourth was passing through London, in a magnificent pageant, a courtier cried, with his face all aglow, ‘ *Could* there be anything, your majesty, added to this ? ’ ‘ Yes,’ said the king, thoughtfully—‘ *continuance.* ’ You and I are, for the time, as full of happiness as we can hold. We

are in the freshness of our youth. Were some magic mirror, however, held up before us, in which we could see our future selves gray and wrinkled and bowed with age, it would cloud somewhat this sunny hey-day of ours. But, when we meet in a circle of old friends, beyond the bourne, what a thrill there will be in the thought that we are to be forever young! No creeping feebleness, no dimness of the eye or deadness of the ear or failure of any faculty or power forever! An eternal newness and energy of life, for the glorious enterprises spread before us all? The memories of old men fade, here; but, there, whatever we acquire we may hope to retain forever."

"This is all very delightful a hope," I said. "But what is your ground for it?"

"Why," replied George, "it seems to me to follow from the necessity of the case. It is the *body* of flesh and blood that grows old. We have no trace of evidence that the soul, in itself, has any such liability."

"But the soul seems feeble in old age," I objected.

"Yes," he said, "so it *seems*. But only because it can do so little with the body through which it must act. As some one puts it, the harper is as skillful as ever—only the harp is broken and out of tune. But, in the other life,

we are expressly promised a body that shall be free from all this. It is raised in incorruption. It is raised in power. It is raised a spiritual body. If these attributes do not preserve it in perpetual youth, I should like to know what they are *for*. Such a body can no more grow old than the air or the sunlight. There is nothing in it on which age can take hold.

“Some people imagine that *time*, alone, works changes—that, merely by the lapse of years, buildings, for instance, decay to ruins. A great mistake. If the Parthenon could have been saved from war and storms and the crumbling effect of heat and cold, time would never have hurt it. We should see it as perfect to-day as when the architect pronounced it finished.

“So, neither in men does time cause the infirmities of age. It is toil and want and worry and chemical changes at work on the body, that bring it about. Even against all drawbacks we see men who carry the freshness of their youth down into later life. Coleridge said that *genius* is nothing else than that. They jealously guard their health, and, as far as may be, keep their bodies young. They carry along their enthusiasm with them, and, at the last moment, show ‘the ruling passion strong in death.’

“Now, in the spiritual body, what is to pre-

vent, as centuries roll on, the *increase*, rather than the loss of the buoyancy, the ardor, all the fresh impulses, of youth? The possession of one great truth inspires us to reach after another. Broadening views call out latent energies. Above all, the continuous influx of life from the Infinite Source of life will expand and uplift the soul."

"A glorious prospect," I interposed, "and I want to hear more. But, just now, it fails to meet a certain, inner want of my being. In other words I would like some dinner."

Young as he is, George is growing somewhat bald, and wore his hat down to the dining-hall. As he went in, and a waiter put it on the rack, in a long row of others as much alike, apparently, as so many eggs, George said,

"You'll never be able to tell that hat again."

"O yes, sah!" said the man. "You see!"

Perhaps it was because of the sharp contrast with the matter on which we had been talking in our room—but I could not avoid feeling how absorbed in the *body*, with its needs and appetites, we all became, as we took up our *menus*. The selection of dishes, the rattle of knives and forks. the words overheard, and the loaded trays passing in every direction—well, how much less intent were we in our service to palate and stomach than

the denizens of a menagerie at feeding time? It is all probably best. I am no ascetic. But it is a comfort that, by and by, in the life of which the preacher spoke, this morning, we shall save the immense aggregate of time we give to this, for higher uses.

As we came out, the waiter was ready with George's hat. He had made no mistake. And we learned, afterward, that the man identifies each one of fifty hats, however similar. To me, with my wretched memory, it seems almost supernatural. A couple of centuries ago, he would have been in peril as a wizard.

After dinner, we walked down to the Lakeside Park—a sadly neglected place. I hope they have better pleasure-grounds than that in this modest town. The sight of the lake, in its immensity, with no farther shore in view, appeared to bring back to George's mind the matter we were discussing before dinner.

“With this eternal youth,” he said, “I believe there will be perfect freedom for each one to follow his bent. I noticed, in Prof. Stuart's commentary on Proverbs, lately, that the text, ‘Train up a child in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it,’ is commonly quite misunderstood. There have been thousands of sermons preached from it, all making it mean by

‘the way,’ the *righteous, godly* way. But it refers only to the bent of his genius—the employment in which he is fitted to succeed best in life. Now, in this world of ours, that is hard to learn and to do. Mr. Wilson, our village-merchant, has wished, all his life, that his father had made him a machinist. His bookkeeper, Morrison, has told me that, if he could begin life again, he would be an artist though obliged to live on bread and water. My classmate Holmes, who had a passion for old Saxon and its literature, said often, on his death-bed, that he hoped he should be permitted to take up that study in heaven. In various ways we are wrenched out of our natural bent. But not so, I trust, in the next life. There we may be free to find, each one, the occupation for which the Lord adapted him in the very make of his being. From what a deal of friction that will free us! What zest and ardor it will throw into life! What immensely greater variety, where none are forced from outside themselves into a monotonous uniformity!

“As you know, thousands of poor mortals are thrown, like the babies of Flat Head Indians or girls in China with dwarfed feet, into surroundings that wrench them, at the very outset, from their natural inclination. They are hardly allowed to become aware of the inclination. But, in the

other life, one may well hope, these perversions fall off. There deemed discover for what they were made. So they grow into the diversities that, like the various colors in a painting or tones in a symphony, make up the grandly rounded whole. Through heredity, and largely through occupations, we get our faces and looks from outside ourselves, But, in the spiritual body, the soul, from within, beyond reasonable question, will shine out in its strength and mold the countenance to express its own inner life.

“ With all evil, too, departing from the soul to leave it pure in its white innocence, what a recovery from the incubus in that! The fresh vigor of a man raised from disease, with the blood tingling along his veins, in a bright and bracing spring morning, must be nothing compared with it. Moreover, on this side of the veil, we draw *spiritual* life from God, but hardly think of receiving new vitality from Him through the whole being. We rejoice that, while ‘the outward perisheth,’ the ‘inward is renewed day by day.’ These perishable bodies, that begin to die when first born into life, seem to allow nothing else. But, in the world to come, why should not the Lord, the Fountain of Life, as I said awhile ago, pour into us fresh currents of vitality and energy, from moment to moment ? ”

So we strolled along, conversing, and wondering at the sea before us, as it rolled in huge billows, all *good to drink*, till the approaching chill of evening sent us back to the hotel.

XVII.

FEBRUARY 10, 1881.

MY Diary looks reproachfully at me as I open it. I have been sadly neglectful. We jaunted about so incessantly, after that talk by the lake-side in Chicago, and I have been so perpetually busy, since our return, in receiving and returning calls, and getting settled in housekeeping, that I have had hardly a breathing-spell. After my small way, I have been making history, instead of writing it.

Well—here we are in dear, old Raynham, enjoying love in a cottage. And I am as sure that it is genuine love as I am that this is a genuine cottage. I honestly believe, moreover, that I enjoy our modest home more than I could a palatial mansion in the city. *That*, I fancy, with all its sumptuous furniture and bric-a-brac, would be already so full of interest, outwardly, that there would hardly be occasion or room for infusing into it any charm from our wedded life. Somehow this smaller scope of material things around

us seems to leave a larger range for the soul's activities and gratifications. And fine books and engravings, of which we own a few, have some charm, in contrast with these plain surroundings, that they could not have in a gilded drawing-room.

Then, this open fireplace in the cozy library! Though we have a furnace sending up from below its hot breath, here and there, I look on that as a low menial, good for only the physical comfort it affords. But this cordial dispenser of good cheer, with its back log and andirons and wide open welcome to the hearthstone, is rather a friend than a servant. It ministers to the soul, as well as to the flesh. Here I have George's gown and slippers ready, with his favorite easy-chair; and, while the ruddy blaze goes roaring up the flue, I plump down in his lap and lay my head on his shoulder and enjoy—well I can think of no words adequate to the occasion. In “the rhetoric of understatement” I should say that the dear fellow improves on acquaintance. I feel like a lapidary, bringing out a great diamond, who finds some new and more beautiful fact every day.

Cæsar too—I must not forget Cæsar. His joy, when his master comes in, is a sight to see. He shakes his huge, shaggy form, from the tip of his nose to the end of his tail. He wants to paw

George all over, and to kiss him with those monstrous jaws that are the more striking for the love and delight he contrives, in his rough way, to express through them. Cæsar carries a great weight of personality about with him. With his immense bulk and stately step, he seems to rise above the animal level and claim a higher recognition. Certainly, as he devotes all this ponderosity and strength to protection and tenderness, I respect him more than I can some men. When we have taken our seats by the fire, he curls up on the rug at our feet for a nap. He is so huge that it must take a deal of sleep to saturate him. He sleeps so heartily too, that *that* must require a great stock for supply.

Not a personage to be slighted is Thommy also, in his cage. Born in captivity, he hardly suffers, I take comfort in believing, from his confinement. He seems quite content with his narrow range of life and experience. If he has no use for those higher endowments, his wings, with which he might rise, careering through space, he is only a reminder to us of low-lived men who leave neglected all their better nature. Does he sing automatically, like a music-box? Or has he as conscious a joy in it as a prima donna? Who can tell? Anyway, I mean to believe, he throws his little life into every trill that awakens us at daybreak.

Here, too, are our beloved books. The best of them all—there is no other, as Sir Walter said to Lockhart, on his death-bed—lies on the table. May it ever be foremost of the treasures of our home! There is a full set of my beloved Irving. God made Washington childless, they say, that he might become the Father of his Country. And that early love of Irving seems to have been blighted that he might take to his pen and win the love of the nation. Was there ever a dearer old bachelor? Here, too, is Prescott. What a lesson to us is that prodigious industry in his blindness! And Hawthorne, making all sorts of originality and beauty to cluster about every object he touches—like a sweet solution, encrusting the poorest packthread with its crystals. Beside him there stands Lowell—our old, rural friend Hosea Bigelow, looking out with wise philosophy and noble love of human kind and blasting scorn of shams and wrongs, through his boorish mask. Thank the Lord for books!

And what *could* we do without the piano and the flute, with which we make up our home orchestra for Sunday evenings? I hope never to drop my music, as so many a married woman does. Among all my inanimate friends for a sombre hour I count my piano the best. Unlike some other friends whom I have known, it meets every

touch with exactly the response I seek. It knows no estrangements—has no moods of its own to gratify. It is no music-box or crank-organ, either, to wear a few tunes threadbare, and afford no other. These keys are an alphabet, rich in exhaustless utterance for every mood “from grave to gay, from lively to severe.”

But, not least of all, I prize my plants. At one point they have the better of books, or engravings—they *live*, they *grow*. They have something new to show, every day. And, as the mediæval monks claimed to have bottles full of the Egyptian plague of darkness, my plants are a section cut from last summer and brought over into February. How they differ among themselves—the rose-bush, scentless and thorny, save where it blooms, and the geranium, fragrant in every leaf! What an object-lesson of faith in the darkest hours, is my night-blooming *Cereus*! If, as Longfellow tells us, flowers are “stars that in earth’s firmament do shine,” how fit that this should show its beauty only in the night!

Whatever claims there may be upon me, I will see, and that often, my darling Susie. The other day as, sitting by her bedside, I looked steadfastly on her, I saw her face as it had been the face of an angel. Though she would gladly be gone, if it were the Master’s will, He keeps her here, I am

sure, to enable us to imagine the heavenly society, to see what a world it must be that is composed of spirits such as hers. She has, of course, no idea of the prodigious unconscious influence she is exerting. There she lies as weak as a babe, and yet lifting all around her like a groundswell. It is a greater power, I am convinced, than that of all her healthy and strong friends together.

Of course she and I could not talk long, without raising the subject that is constantly in her mind and not a little in mine. She counts me, I know, as the dearest friend she has on earth, outside her own family, and spoke of meeting me as such, when I, as well as she, shall have crossed the River.

This reminded me of my discussion with Sybil, while we were rowing, last September, on special friendships in the other life, and the fact that, as the Master had them, they must be right. I spoke of that.

“Certainly,” said Susie; “as each one has his affinities, he will seek for him whom he finds most congenial. So, varieties and harmonies, both, will arise.” Then, pointing to the glass doors opening into the conservatory, she added :

“If our flowers were all of one shape and color, what a monotonous show they would make ! It is wrong, I believe, to think of all the redeemed

as one vast, indiscriminate host, singing one chorus together. We see and hear so much, on earth, of sects and parties and their jealousies, that the very existence of them seems to imply a wrangle. But we might as well assume that the violinist, in an orchestra, must quarrel with the bugler. God made us to differ in nature. It is born in us. You can force together people of various temperaments, as you can stir together oil and water—but you no sooner stop than they begin to settle apart. A Presbyterian and a Methodist do not differ on election and falling from grace, only. Those are merely the flags they fly. How closely would it blend Frenchmen and Americans were they to adopt one flag? The Presbyterian is staid and quiet, and the Methodist more demonstrative. So, we have poets and Gradgrinds, statisticians and artists, antiquarians and inventors. We *need* these different types of humanity to develop the full capacities of our nature. I heard a doctor once, lecturing, in word-pictures, to children.

‘When the chyle is ready for nutriment,’ he said, ‘the little builders in the body are all after it. One trundles up his wheelbarrow and cries, ‘Give me some nail-stuff!’ Then off he goes with his load to build up nails. Another calls—‘bone-matter!’ another ‘muscle-material!’ an-

other, 'skin-supplies!' So they run here and there, keeping up the whole body.'

Now, somewhat in this way, I take it, men and women of different tastes, talents, occupations, make the most of our common humanity. And I believe they will go on, doing so forever. No two will be exactly alike. Take out *sin* from these diversities, and the more of the diversities you have, the better. It is envy, jealousy, that make all the trouble.

Without these contrasted characteristics, we could never explore the works of God, throughout the universe. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, if the Columbuses and Cabots and De Gamas and Frobishers had not been born such adventurers that they could not resist the beckoning of the sea, how long might the New World have lain unknown! What would the philosophers or the poets have done to disclose it? So, in the life beyond us, I suspect, some of the redeemed, while others study and meditate, will go ranging among the worlds for new discoveries of the wisdom and love of our Father to his children.

Here, too, will be room for love to find something to do and to give. People ask what work there can be for love in a world where none are poor, or sick, or miserable."

“Yes,” I said, somewhat eagerly. “I have often raised that question.”

“Why,” she replied, “every finite creature is both poor and rich, in relation to every other finite creature, and must be forever. That is, he has something which that other has not, and the other has something which he has not.”

“But, to go on,” she continued, “of course every one of the redeemed is full to the overflow of love. If so, he delights to confer pleasure. And, to minds as active and alert as those in the life above, there must be exquisite pleasure in new information or ideas. Every explorer will rejoice, therefore, in conferring it. Imagine a company gathered there, when one of their number, returning from abroad, comes in announcing,

‘O friends, I have discovered a *new world*! No one of us, I am sure, has ever seen it before. And it is covered with such wonders from our Father’s hand as He has displayed, so far as I know, on no other world that He has created!’

“What was Columbus’s discovery to that? Remember, there is no necessity that an infinite Creator, should repeat Himself on any sphere that He calls into existence. If, of the untold billions of men who have lived, no two ever had faces alike, can He not vary the worlds as well?

And love can gather her contributions of knowledge from so much the larger field because the work of creation is doubtless *in progress still*. It would be monstrous to suppose that, when the Lord had rolled on their orbits the hundred millions of worlds that have been counted out by our telescopes, He fell, like the Hindoo Brahma, into inaction. He must exert his infinite resources, and they must be always immeasurably in advance of any explorations of ours.

But such discovery is only one line along which love may find her gifts. Every student, every scientist, every philosopher, among the happy millions, will make fresh discoveries and bring them into the common stock of knowledge. The old notion that God will disclose everything to us at once, by miraculous revelation, I do not accept. We all know that the pleasure of acquiring is greater than that of possessing. Every successful merchant, even, tells us that. And I expect, for one, to be left to acquire knowledge there, somewhat as we do here."

If Susie's mother had been in, she would before this, have put an end to our conversation. I began to fear, myself, that the invalid was tiring herself out. So I proposed to bring George and Sybil, on Tuesday evening, to make up a symposium on these great themes that so interest all

four of us. And it was agreed that Susie should, in the main, let us do the talking.

FEBRUARY 13.

George came home, by agreement, earlier than usual, and we took tea in season to call for Sybil and leave plenty of time at Susie's. When we arrived, I broached the subject for which we had come together by referring to Susie's ideas of heavenly employments and asking Sybil's views. I knew she was full to overflowing of the matter; but she replied, as I supposed and rather hoped she would,

“No; let us hear from Mr. Vaughn.”

George was as modest as she. But, by considerable prying and pushing, we at last started him.

“In regard to anything in the other life which is not clearly revealed in the Bible,” he said, “we must of course speak, and even think, with reverent caution. But there are many inferences from what we certainly know, which I think we may hold with some confidence. For example, if there are incalculable millions of inhabitants there, if they are delivered from the incubus of sin, and so abounding in life, I judge that they must have an immense variety of occupations. Without that, I cannot conceive of them as happy. To a right-

mind man, even here, laziness is misery. A limb that should be never exercised would grow flaccid and finally wither. That only eptomizes the universal law of all living creatures."

"But George," I interposed, "when Adam had sinned, was not labor among the thorns imposed as a curse?"

"Yes and no, my dear," he said. (How stiff and prosy that "my dear" sounded! It was the first time I had ever heard it from him.)

"Adam and Eve, before they fell, had something to do. They were put into the Garden 'to dress and to keep it.' But that was pleasant activity. Among the thorns, Adam had painful drudgery. A distinction with a difference! And I suppose the work, whatever it may be, in which the redeemed are intensely active, is freer from care or toil or fatigue than the wing-strokes of a lark, as she soars into the sunlight in a fresh, spring morning. The spiritual body knows nothing of fatigue.

"When men had begun to sin, the necessity for labor—toilsome labor even—was no curse, but a blessing. It has saved the world from rushing down, as fast as it otherwise would, into luxury and vice and ruin. But, partly from a misunderstanding of that, and partly from laziness and selfishness, men have put a stigma on labor,

and counted those who are exempt from it the higher classes! It is lucky for such higher classes that they do not air their aristocracy as bees in a hive. The useful citizens of that little community, wiser than we, would soon give them their deserts as they do the other drones. And there is no more place for them in heaven than in a bee-hive."

Upon which Susie showed, again, how heartily she could laugh.

"And is that all you can say," I asked, "as to the particular employments of the upper world?"

"No," said George, "I think we can infer some of them as, at least, quite probable, from the very necessity of the case. If it is a redeemed society such as we would all gladly see below, there must be some sort of organization and government."

"But," objected Sybil, "what need of government where there is no crime?"

"Disorder and waste of labor," he replied, "might easily come from other sources than crime. The comparative ignorance of some, the want of skill in others—even the self-forgetful eagerness of many to do the same generous thing—might throw matters into confusion. Some arrangement and administration would be necessary. And, in those vast hosts and innumerable communities, no one can estimate how many may, in that way, be employed."

“But now let us have your views, Miss Martin; I have done more than my share of the talking.”

“Well, I cannot add much,” said Sybil, “and would rather listen still to you. I love to believe that the differences in work, in the other life, will not divide men into social castes as they do here. John Newton said that, if two angels were sent from heaven, one to rule a city and the other to sweep its streets, probably neither would go more gladly to his work than the other—neither feel that he was more or less honored than his brother. In short, I suppose it is love, not outward, incidental things like office or station, that wins regard in that high society.

“And, as to the employments there, I think one may be the instruction of those who, in long succession through the centuries, are and will be passing over from the earth—and perhaps from other worlds as well. Why should not the worlds be so many fitting-schools for that grand, central university? Whether or not there is anything like our pedagogies, *some* kind of instruction would seem inevitable as the natural course of things. And it must be a loving service, that will draw teacher and taught most tenderly together. Christian scholars, some of them, hold, I see, that where Paul speaks (1 Cor. xv. 43) of the body being ‘sown’ in corruption, dishonor, weakness,

he refers not to death and burial, but to birth into this life, as compared with birth into the next. 'Weakness' is hardly the word to apply to a dead body, but just the one for a babe. It implies some life."

"But," I asked, "if we enter the other world in a kind of infancy, how could Paul make us raised in power?"

"O," she replied, "because he speaks by anticipation, potentially. We are raised into the assurance of having power as we grow. A nurseryman says of little sprouts, a few inches high, 'This is an oak, and that an elm and that a maple'—not that they are now great shade-trees, but only certain to become such.

"But, however all this may be, the older residents of that unseen world must certainly know far more than the new comers, and must be glad to afford information. That will be *one* of the delightful occupations there."

Susie had been so absorbed in our subject, from the first, that she was just commencing herself, when I stopped her with a kiss, saying,

"You must not speak out in meeting! I promised your mother you should not."

So we adjourned the meeting without overtasking her strength.

XVIII.

MARCH 26.

The commotion in the church has recalled my thoughts, since last I found time for my diary, from the other world to this. Good Dr. Bentley has got more light, in the last fortnight, on "came not to send peace but a sword," than the commentaries would have given him in a twelvemonth. And George had to return from his peaceful communion with the spirits of the just made perfect to battle with spirits unjust and decidedly imperfect. The dregs of the town have been thrown to the surface. The meanest passions that infest men's souls have been stirred together in a witches' caldron, over as hot a fire as ever was kindled from below, and it has been "bubble, bubble, toil and trouble," day after day. That the currents flowing in upon us have been, at least partly, from unseen sources, I can easily perceive—but they were not celestial sources.

We have had a struggle with the liquor-interest on local option. The issue was joined a fortnight

ago last Monday, and our side routed the enemy. Dr. Bentley, though very conservative, theologically, stood foremost in the fight for reform. The three saloonists, Semler, Diggs, and Twingley, hate him with a rancor that is, of course, the only honor they could confer, Semler, who led the others, with most of their customers, like a magnet trailed through sand draws all that is blackest in the town after himself. His priest sympathized, though rather inertly, with the reformers. But Semler had his origin far back in the Black Forest and confronts our Christian civilization with a barbarism that is really picturesque in the sharpness of the contrast.

There have been Achans within the camp, too, who were boastfully sure that they had, under our good minister, a leverage that would pry him out of his position. But I feel like singing Deborah's song of deliverance from the enemies of Israel. By the Lord's grace, George and Dr. Larrabee were too much for the conspirators. The church stood manfully up to their duty, and Dr. Bentley is more firmly entrenched in their love and in his position than ever.

APRIL 4.

Our good pastor's wife has had the idea that whoever diverged from her rather mediæval notions of truth must, to that degree, be falling away

from the Master. As light and warmth are both from Him, darkness, she supposed, implied a chill. I think the heavenly spirit of Susie is perplexing her. Of a dead orthodoxy she has seen enough to know it. But a live heresy—or what she would reckon such—badly mystifies the good woman. That Susie is spiritually a shining light she cannot question. That there are no definite dark spots in contrast upon her, she is obliged to concede. But a kind of indefinite shadow, a haze of dangerous error, she still imagines that she perceives, afloat in that sick room.

I verily believe she will draw a long breath of relief when Susie has passed away. She knows that it would be a blessed exchange for the departed, and she herself would be delivered from some sore perplexities. Being mentally rather inert, and preferring to hug the shore of established tenets, she dreads to be drawn out into the open.

She is charmed by the beauty of Susie's thought and hope and aspiration, and yet haunted by the query whether it is not a dangerous charm around which she must cautiously hover rather than take it into fellowship.

Last Sunday she had a new shock. Feeling that it would be an act of mercy, if not of necessity, to call upon Susie, she went over in the afternoon. As she entered the room, she saw that the

invalid, sitting propped up by pillows, was quite busy with two or three ragged little waifs from the street. Mrs. Bentley is very short-sighted, and at first supposed she was reading to them in the Bible spread in her lap. But, as she reached the bed, what was her amazement to see that it was a spelling-book, and that Susie was actually teaching them their letters on the Sabbath! Moreover, the delinquent seemed not in the least embarrassed at being discovered—and that, by the pastor's wife—in the very act. As Susie saw her eyes fixed on the school-book with a look of astonishment, she couldn't help, as she tells me, an amused expression which would hardly go far to atone for her offense. I note here the conversation, as nearly as I can recall it, from Susie's account.

Mrs. Bentley's eyes had so plainly remonstrated with her that she used her tongue in reply.

"You are shocked at seeing me keeping day-school on Sunday, Mrs. Bentley; that is plain enough."

"Why y-yes," she replied, "I shall have to confess that I am."

"Well, I must do something. I cannot be idle. If I could expect to be here long enough to make it worth while, I would have a telephone to the church and get some of the service."

“You have the Best of Books on the stand here, I see.”

“Yes, and I read it some, this forenoon. But for me that is a pure luxury—almost a selfish one.”

“W-what, my dear?” asked the good lady, bewildered; “I don’t understand you.”

“Well, the fact is, I am teaching these little fellows that they may read *their* Bibles. Their mothers are so poor and need their help so much that they can spare them only on Sundays. This costs me some self-denial. Reading the Bible would not. It would be an indulgence—something for myself, and it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

“But why not do this on a week-day?”

“I have just shown why; and besides I do not *want* to do it on a week day. It is the most thoroughly Christian, the most sacred, use I could find for the Sabbath. I think I get nearer the Master just now and am more acceptable to Him, with my spelling-book than I could with a hymn-book.”

“But you believe in church-going?”

“Certainly I do—for those able to go. But the *spirit* in which we act is the great matter. To one who has a right spirit a boy’s alphabet may be as much a means of grace as a church service.”

“Well, I declare!” cried Mrs. Bentley, as we met in the street, next day. “Susie Wickham is the strangest girl I ever came across. I found her keeping day-school on Sunday, and she thought that better than reading her Bible!”

“Let us go over to-morrow,” I said, “and see her. I suspect you do not fully understand her meaning. This little jar between you and her is only a meeting of the tides on the surface. Down below you are of one spirit.”

Of this last I had no doubt. But, whether Mrs. Bentley could be made to see it was another affair. And, as they began, it seemed very decidedly another affair.

“I don’t see the right,” said Mrs. Bentley, “of taking secular work into the Sabbath.”

“And *I* don’t see,” replied Susie, with a gentle smile, “the ground for this sharp distinction between things sacred and things secular. The Jews were constantly complaining of the Saviour’s want of regard for sacred times, like the Sabbath, and of sacred places, like the temple, which last, He told them, would soon have not one stone standing on another.”

“What?”—that He aimed to lower their regard—

“Pardon me!” cried Susie,—“no, not by any means. He wanted to level up, not down, to

make every time and place sacred to the service of God and the welfare of men. The Pharisees, with a farthing-rushlight, threw their glimmer of artificial sanctity on this thing and that; but He, as the Sun of Righteousness, would flood all things with consecration and with the glory of heaven. Every duty has its season. If we ought not to plow or trade on Sunday, neither ought we to hold a prayer-meeting in a busy store on Monday. Selling goods, or making nails or calico is, or ought to be, as real a service to God as preaching. A model Christian will carry as much love of the Master into a counting-house or a studio as into a church."

"Well, this *is* new doctrine!" cried Mrs. Bentley, turning, in amazement, to me. "The Sabbath no more sacred than any other day!"

"Certainly," said Susie,—“only sacred to different uses from the other days. This notion of sacred and secular begets the idea that the week-days are common and second-rate—days in which we ignore the Lord and his ownership of us.”

"You can see this distinction jealously drawn," I said, "in any religious newspaper of half a century ago. I was looking over one the other day. Every editorial, or paragraph among the notes or advertisements, is as pious as any preacher. The editor mewed himself up in his seclusion, and

peered through his loop-holes at the wicked world rushing by—a ghost, as to any concern he has with his times. But the religious editor of our day throws open his windows, and looks out to see things sacred and secular alike through Christian eyes, and bring Christian principles to bear upon them all.”

“Just so,” said Susie; “this notion has come down to us from the old, dead ages, in which they viewed religion as a make-weight, counterbalancing a bad life, from without, rather than as a new principle, pervading and purifying it within. And the same notion has infected our ideas of the other world.”

“But you cannot possibly mean,” cried Mrs. Bentley, “that they do secular things in heaven?”

“Why not?” replied Susie, adjusting the pillows behind herself. “Of course I do. That is exactly what I mean.”

“That would be no heaven for me,” cried Mrs. Bentley, with a resolute shake of her head. “Think of it!—a heaven as common as a week-day!”

“Can anything be common, through which our Father is honored and served?” asked Susie.

“But somehow,” said Mrs. Bentley, uneasily, “I cannot see as much sanctity in a wash-tub or dinner-pot, as in a hymn-book.”

“Perhaps,” replied Susie, “if you say a hand-saw or a chisel, you may.”

“How so?” cried the old lady, surprised. “What is there more sacred in either of them?”

“Do you remember who pushed the hand-saw and drove the chisel, for fifteen years, in Nazareth?” asked Susie, looking up earnestly into her face. “And do you expect to find any finer purity or higher sanctity than His, in heaven?”

Mrs. Bentley’s eyes fell, as Susie continued.

“I believe that Jesus gave to the carpenter’s bench, among the shavings, and to bargains with customers, so many years, to break up our miserable notion that there is, or can be, anything more pure or sacred, on earth or in heaven, than honest work, done in obedience to God.”

Mrs. Bentley had lost her surprised look, and was eagerly leaning forward, with her hand on the bed.

“But Christians,” Susie continued, “backslid from His wisdom into their own folly. With their fiction that there is something corrupt in matter, they concluded that, the farther they could escape from it into spiritual abstractions, the purer they should be. So, instead of battling with the world’s temptations, and winning the fight like men, they decamped from the field, in a cowardly panic, into monkish cells and anchorites’ caves.

There they nursed their phantasy that in secular life there is a contamination, from which, in heaven, we are to escape. So, there has come down to us, through the centuries, this notion of the life above, as a kind of celestial monastery, in which nothing goes on but an endless liturgy.

Our hymns are colored with that idea. Where is the authority for

‘Congregations ne’er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end.’

I believe that Sabbaths have no *beginning* there. The redeemed can have no use, as I see, for a Sabbath. We need it *here*, in the clatter of business, and with our bent toward worldliness—but there, with no such distraction, it has outlived its usefulness.”

“But don’t you suppose,” asked Mrs. Bentley, “that the Lord, in his wisdom and power and glory, will absorb us there?”

“Certainly I do,” said Susie. “And, for that very reason, I do *not* believe in singing psalms forever. He is so magnificently vast—so varied in his works and ways! If we are to praise Him with any ardor, we must know something of what He has done and is doing in the universe.

You call astronomy a secular science, I suppose. You would not study it on Sunday. But

how, without a knowledge of it there, are you to look into the wonders of creation in all the worlds? So with geology, chemistry, biology, botany, and all the rest. Now, every scientist travels along his favorite line of study, year after year, and then confesses that he has hardly started—that the path reaches away into the mists of the unknown. And do you conclude that a road has stopped where it enters a fog? Are we to advance, in exploring the works of God, till we reach the veil, and then, beyond, lay all aside, to sing and pray forever? For my part, I believe that, as we go on and on, discovering new heights and depths and immensities of what God has wrought, they will swell the flood of our adoration as with Spring-tides rising over all.”

Susie was tired, and I begged her to stop. But, from some cause, perhaps the fine April weather, in which the windows have been open, she seems stronger than a few weeks ago. Anyway, she insisted that she would finish what she now had to say, and rest afterward.

“And another point,” she went on to say. “What could we do, without what you count secular things, to develop our full powers in heaven? Worship calls out but one section of the whole circle of our being. But, as to insight, courage, perseverance, organizing power, skill in administra-

tion, use of memory—with a score of other faculties, and the joy we have in the exercise of them—are all these to lie dormant forever? Why, we should be like a vine, from which the gardener prunes every cluster but one, to develop that. Or, worse, we should be as Blind Tom, with a genius for music, but as to all things else—you know what.

Paul teaches us that we are to put away childish things in the upper world, and be rounded out to the full, grand ripeness of our being. How much wealth or compass would there be in a Christian *here*, who had done nothing but repeat a liturgy, year in and out—a choir-boy, fit for nothing else? And, for how humiliating a reason it is, that Christians deny what they call secular occupations in the other world! The reservoir of spiritual life in them is so nearly empty that only meager rills of it trickle into their secular affairs. They can hardly conceive of enough of it to flood these affairs equally with their worship. But, as we ripen, there above, O how different it will be! Holiness unto the Lord, as Zechariah has it, shall be upon the bells of the horses. In everything and everywhere our common love to God and men shall flow, like the blood through the body, into every possible employment of the redeemed. Every industry shall be only another name for a Christian service.”

APRIL 20.

I was called away to the kitchen, as I was writing those last lines—and now my darling Susie has taken her flight heavenward! I was at her beside every day—almost every hour, and have had no time till now for a word in my diary. Dear creature! simply to be near her was a sanctification in itself. She reminded me of what I have heard of St. Peter's Church at Rome—that it is so large as to have a climate of its own. She had a soul great and pure enough to carry a heavenly atmosphere of her own. I felt as if breathing a kind of spiritual oxygen.

She revolutionized my idea of a death-scene as one of gloom. Instead of seeming a weakling whom we must support and comfort, she lifted us all with her victorious joy. She appeared to be already at the heavenly level and to pass rather horizontally than vertically into the other world. Her view that death makes no immediate change in character I could easily accept in regard to herself. I had a feeling that a heaven full of such spirits as she, gathered around the common Master, would be heaven enough for me—at least to begin with.

That talk, reported in my last entry, was more than she had strength to bear. We little thought that, through the whole of it, the soul was slowly

breaking away—that every sentence snapped some strand of the cords that held it. As a great blessing to us, she failed so slowly and with so little pain, that she was thoroughly herself to the last moment. Some go into the Dark River as over a cliff; but she was led down a gentle slope.

“O Alice!” she said, one day, “you cannot imagine the ecstasy I have in the presence of the Master here, and the prospect—though it seems hardly possible—of his fuller and more glorious presence soon! You thought you were happy when led to your marriage—and your face did beam like the full moon. But it could have been hardly a shadow of this. Not only the joy is so great, but there is a *quality* in it that I can no more describe than I can the flavor of a fruit that you have never tasted.”

But George has come in, and I must lay this by, till to-morrow.

XIX.

APRIL 21.

Susie's triumph over all fear of death was so complete that I must garner here as many as possible of her words before they escape me.

"The Master seems so near me," she said, "that I can almost put out my hand and touch Him. I am sure it would not startle me to hear His voice in the room. It would seem the most natural of all things. He is to me what the guide was, at Niagara, when I went down through the Cave of the Winds. At first I feared the awful plunge of so many tons of water from far aloft, and the rush and roar of all the elements around. But, when the man led one of our party safely down, and then, reappearing, called for me, I took his hand and, clinging to that, felt as safe as upon Goat Island. Our dear Lord went through this to which I have nearly come, and returned, at his resurrection, to take tens of thousands of his people over. Why should I tremble in such care as that?"

And, as I was thinking, this morning, before you came, what we call death seems to me like a tunnel our train passed through, on that same trip westward. When we reached it and looked in, it was blacker than midnight. It appeared dreadful to go plunging through, not knowing what we might strike. But suddenly, as we entered and the daylight vanished, the electric lights were turned on, and the whole line, to the exit, flashed and glowed with a glare like noon.

How foolish to talk of being *resigned* to death! In the New Testament there is no such idea. It was to staying here that Paul had to resign himself. 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is *gain*.' Imagine a young captain resigning himself to a generalship!—an heir resigned to a fortune of a million! We are Christian in our doctrine—and heathen in our speech. It seems to me a sacrilege—this disguising the sweet and gracious angel who comes to welcome us at the gateway into eternal life, and making him masquerade as the hideous King of Terrors. I hope there will be no broken shaft erected on my grave, as if the transition were a wreck of life, a blasting of all hope and promise. If there were to be any symbol in marble, far better a little nest, with a new-fledged eaglet taking flight from it for the skies, or some other emblem of the beginning of the new and

more glorious life—not the mere end of the old one.

“But now, Alice,” she went on to say, “I have something to propose. I thank our dear Lord, that, in view of the great change, I am full of joy. ‘Though I go through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.’ But, you know, it has been said that a Christian, leaving the world, catches, even this side of the veil, some glimpse of the scenes beyond. I see nothing unreasonable or unlawful in the possibility of that. If the ‘ministering spirits’ are around us, waiting for our departure to them, why should they not—when we have passed too far into the River to turn back and make disclosures—be allowed to comfort us with a sight of themselves? I have often wished that, if it were God’s will, I might test that for myself. And now I have come to where, perhaps, I can do it. Of course I may drop off suddenly. I may sink into unconsciousness. But I may not. I may be myself, to the last breath. And, if I am, provided I discover any trace of the realities into which I shall be passing, I would like to make some sign of it. I can think of nothing lighter or easier than looking—of course without moving the head—in one direction or another. Please, therefore, when the time shall come, press my

cheek with your finger, every few minutes. I will take that as your question whether I make the least discovery, and will turn my eyes to the right for yes, to the left for no. You will?"

Of course, I assented. Had it not been for Susie's perfect peace, which put me so entirely at my ease, had she not been so natural and composed in all she said, I should have been overawed in the thought of venturing out with her into the edge of the shadows. But I knew we should both be acting reverently, and I could not believe the Master would count it presumptuous. Moreover, Susie was so calm and well-balanced, so little liable to any wild phantasy, that I felt, for that reason, more interest in this strange way of inquiry. She had taken no anodyne or stimulant. Her powers were all failing alike and abreast of one another—no one so specially defective or deranged as to throw her into confusion. Mind and body were acting, though feebly, yet as nearly normally as perhaps would be possible when approaching the end.

Of course we could not choose our hour of day or night. We could only await the hour the Lord should choose. The doctor said she could hardly remain with us now more than a day or two.

On Tuesday, at about nine o'clock in the forenoon, the hour had apparently arrived. It was one of the loveliest of spring mornings. The air

was so mild that the windows were partly open, and the fragrance of the violet-beds and lilac buds was wafted in. The robins were returning from the south, and a pair of them were busily building a nest within a rod of the house. The balmy day must have contributed something to the deep joy of Susie's inner life.

I was really afraid I might be absorbed rather in watching her face than in the inquiry in hand. I had always thought her beautiful; but she seemed now going through a slow transfiguration. Though her features, of course, were pale—not emaciated—there was in them a flush of the soul that relieved them of any deadness of color. Her auburn hair, in great, rich masses, lay disheveled on the pillow, and her eyes had in them a light that I had never seen there before. Even my grief at losing her was, for the time, overcome by my perfect admiration as I sat and gazed. The soul seemed resolved to fill its dwelling with one grand illumination before the final departure.

When I intimated that the doctor thought her near the end, she smiled in such a flood of joy that, for the moment, I forgot George and our dear home, and father and mother and all at the old home, and fairly wished myself in her place. There seems to me to be as much difference in the range of expression of eyes as of tongues.

Susie could say more with hers in a half minute than most men could utter with the voice in a half hour. Indeed I had a fear that they would convey so much as to confuse me in regard to their real meaning, during the inquiry she had planned. But, a little after, the failing life-power seemed to deplete all that, as if the soul had half withdrawn, and to leave her meaning clear.

The family had consented to her wish in the matter—they would have consented to anything—and I took my place by the bed, with the father and mother, heart-broken and in tears, on the other side.

She had apparently been in silent prayer, and not fully aware that we were ready for the inquiry. When I pressed her cheek with my finger, she instantly opened her eyes with a quick glance of recognition, and turned them to the left, evidently intimating that she had full presence of mind.

We supposed her time had come. But she showed more vitality than we expected. Whether this was a mere animal life-power, or whether the soul, reluctant to break up its familiar domicile, half-unconsciously held to it, was, of course, unknown to us. Perhaps almost equally to her. She appeared—if I may speak of her as apart from the body—to come up, at times, to the eyes,

looking out with a glimpse that was slight, yet significant, and then retiring again, more deeply within. Was she exploring within, ranging through the familiar rooms and inquiring if she could be content to leave them? Or was she studying them as a contrast with the new abode in prospect, to congratulate herself upon *that*?

It was beautiful to see how, when I whispered softly the Name that is above every name, in an instant her eyes flashed back their glad recognition, and the lips started as if they would delight to be loud in praise.

It was, perhaps, only a fancy of mine, but I seemed to detect, through the eyes, a groping of the soul, with an inner sense to which spiritual realities would open—a peering after the discovery that she might report to me. She appeared to recognize that she could see only what it was in her to see, and to be endeavoring to fall into fuller harmony with that for which she hoped.

At one time, along the course of those strange hours, when I touched her cheek, she responded, at once, with the eyes, but was evidently in so ecstatic a frame as to have forgotten, for an instant, the question I was asking and to be only gazing and wondering and adoring Him who was to her, all in all.

But when, a few minutes after, I repeated the

question, she opened her eyes and looked directly into mine, with as full a recognition as if to say, "Yes, I know," and then turned them to the left. This perfect self-possession gave me the fullest confidence in the language in which she was speaking. Though she had no longer strength to articulate a syllable, and though the soul was already arising and taking the first steps of its departure, it had dismissed nothing of its consciousness or lost communication with the friends it was leaving.

In response to one touch, her eyes responded with an instant and decided turn to the left, as if they were perceiving nothing but a blank. At the next inquiry, they veered falteringly the other way, as if something had crossed the field of the inner vision, but whether a shadow or a living figure she could not determine. The next time she looked part way toward the right; then the pupils paused and fluctuated, and finally, as if disappointed, passed slowly to the left. Once, when they were inclining hopefully to an affirmative, a sudden gleam came into them that thrilled me with expectation, but soon faded with only a negative behind it.

So the hours glided on till three in the afternoon, when, as quietly as an evening breeze dies away, her last breath left us desolate. She had

given no sign of a discovery, on which we could rely—and I think I shall be, through life, exceedingly suspicious of such signs.

Had she seemed, before the end came, overcome with any fear, had there been, in the whole scene, anything to excite compassion, the gloom of her departure, to us, would have been many shades lighter. But we felt that an uplifting power had suddenly passed from beneath us and let us fall. We were all prostrated alike, and, as we gazed on the beautiful, fleshly casket, from which such a jewel had been removed, we could do nothing but weep together.

XX.

JUNE 12, 1883.

My! how time has flown since my last entry here! It seems but a month or two since I was following dear Susie to the edge of that great mystery into which she passed. But this bouncing Phil of ours—already nearly two years old—is evidence enough that *that* chronology is somewhat awry.

The boy is the image of his father. There is no Herbert about him that I can see. He is all Vaughn. And, every time I glance at George and then at the looking-glass, I am glad of it. How profoundly mysterious, how wonderful, is this law of heredity! The physical connection of the father with the son is as nothing. Yet all the lines of the father's personality, intellectual, moral, often the spiritual, as well—converging and focusing in a microscopic point, then, in the child, diverge again, to cover his whole, ever-expanding being! How awful the parents' responsibility! A responsibility too, that strikes so far below the

surface of his life to the very core of his being—below all he says and does to what he *is*! How immeasurable the importance that the child be well born! I thank God for a husband who transmits no ruinous taint to our boy.

At times I seem to see Phil's future life and character in him as he is to-day. Or, rather, I should say, *around* him. To my imagination a larger Phil envelops him—a shadowy outline, to the full scope of which he is growing, day by day. How little the child dreams of all my thoughts as I watch him! He walks from the table to the fire, and thinks nothing of it, while I whisper to myself, "George's very gait! How soon, in all but the name, he will come to be another George!" So, when I see his father in his eyes, and the child wonders why I gaze at him so intently.

George amused him, this afternoon, after tea, by mounting a broomstick and letting Phil drive him around the room. The coachman soon tired of driving, upon which George took to his hands and knees, and Phil bestrode him, as far as his little legs would reach, belaboring him with a twisted newspaper "to make my hossy go." Mrs. Bentley called, during the performance, and I tried to frighten George back to his dignity and into his chair. But he only welcomed her cordially where he was, begging her to excuse him. He says he

was only fulfilling, in part, his paternal promise, made at Phil's baptism. He knew, and I ought to have known, that Mrs. Bentley would have the good sense to enjoy it.

The good woman has felt specially drawn toward us since George so heroically defended her husband in the Society meeting, And what she sees of George's sterling, Christian character considerably abates her horror of his heresies. But to-day she was in quite a state of mind, from a discussion she had had with Sybil, on which she was curious to get George's opinion. So, when Phil had been sent to bed, she began.

"I would rather like to know, Mr. Vaughn, what you and your good wife think about some of Sybil's notions of heaven. I can't promise to subscribe to all you may say, for, you see," she added, laughing, "I'm a little suspicious of your orthodoxy. But I shall be glad to hear. Sybil says she believes there is humor, wit, in heaven—that they have an idea of the ludicrous! Think of that!"

"Well," said George, "I often *have* thought of it." I have an idea that the traditional notion of something questionable in wit and humor, came down—like the idea of an endless Sabbath and the exclusion of anything "secular"—from the Dark Ages. All over Europe, in the remains of

mediæval, Christian art, you find the dolefullest faces. I should think the artists had pictured their nightmmares. Except a few such masters as Raphael, they seem to have thought a choice assortment of horrors was the finest offering they could make from their art to Heaven. So it was, largely, among the Puritans, and still later. President Edwards wrote—"Resolved never to speak anything that is ludicrous, or matter of laughter, on the Lord's Day." How many of the best Christians in the land, in our time, would you get to sign that promise? How many *ought* you to get?

It is this celestial monastery idea, too common in the churches, that so dulls the attractiveness of the better world. Satan would like to throw a little more unnatural gloom into the place, for us. It is just in his line—just the commodity he deals in."

"Well," said Mrs. Bentley, rising and drawing her shawl around her, "I guess I have enough matter for thought, for the present. I must take it home and look it over, with my good man, and conclude how much to accept."

"Winnow it, that is," said George, with a laugh, as he went for his hat to escort her," and blow away the chaff."

"I did not say that," she replied. "It all looks more plausible than I should have thought possible, an hour ago."

So they went out, and I came to my desk, where I am jotting down the conversation.

JUNE 15.

George came home early, by appointment, yesterday afternoon, and he and Sybil and I went, for a ramble, up Mount Sassacus. The monster which bears that name—as I must remember, if we should ever move away from here—stretches his long neck, and mane shaggy with firs and maples, down to the plain behind; but, toward the village, confronts us with his grim, perpendicular face, four hundred feet from the chin to the hair.

We passed along the road, by the river. The quiet stream was a silvery mirror, reflecting the trees on the opposite bank. The images seemed as clear and bold as the originals. For the matter of vividness, it would have been hard to tell which were the reflections. The elms and birches in the water appeared as real and substantial as those in the air,—as able, if left alone, to hold their place.

One could not have seen that the stream was moving, but for the little tell-tale ripple, where it parted at the wooden pier of the bridge.

It is queer how the fringe of the village, in its outskirts on that side, frays out as one goes toward the mountain—(toy-mountain, I suppose they

would call it in Colorado)—to a shanty about the size of a hencoop. But the poverty of a shawl generally shows most at the edges, and so it seems with towns.

We passed Joe Newhall's cow feeding by the edge of the road. The poor thing has no home to go to, except when Joe can get something from her. She picks up her living, like other tramps, along the highway. I wish they were all as innocent and as useful as she.

After the path began to work its way up around the edge of the cliff, I thought it taught me a lesson. Often it met great trees and rocks that compelled it to turn aside. But right on it went, if not directly then zig-zag, but never giving out. And, as we trudged along up, though, in a warm summer-day, there was not much fun in it, I could not help thinking how much easier it was than a *spiritual* rise. Moreover, as we slipped and backslid on *this* ascent, there was no pang of remorse—an immense difference!

In due time we reached the "Devils' pulpit." That broad, flat rock gives the finest view in the whole region. Why do we attribute so many a grand, natural object to his satanic majesty? Because we feel that it is somehow superhuman, and yet shrink from attaching a Divine name to it?

Some philanthropist has contrived a rustic seat

up there, and we were glad enough to accept his hospitality. The trees, down below, in which we could look into the birds' nests, the river, stealing into and out of the groves on its way, the white homes amidst the foliage, and the far-off, solemn sea, were a rich return for the toil on the mountain slope.

Sybil, being a teacher, was not often with us and the fact of our meeting now, though only *so* far up toward heaven, reminded us all of dear Susie and her speculations on the life of which she now knows so well.

"Yon haven't heard, Sybil," I said, "that Mrs. Bentley came to us, the other day, in something of a strait about your other-world heresies?"

"No," she replied, "but I hope you relieved her, partly at least. I wouldn't pain the dear, old lady for the world. She has a row of by-gone notions, hung up around the chambers of her inner life, of which, for her sake, I would not make light. She takes them down, occasionally, and dusts them off and looks them over, and puts them back, but I think I see that she already begins to discover the moth-eaten spots.

But, going back, for a little, to the general subject which has been so favorite a one with us all, as it was with Susie Wickham, I have often thought that the angels are less to us, in our anticipations, than they ought to be."

“How do you mean?” I asked.

“Well,” she replied, “we mass them together, indiscriminately. We make an angel an angel, neither more nor less. They lose all distinction—all individuality. But it is not so that the Bible represents them. They differ there. The three who came to Abraham appeared so much like common men, that he seems to have taken them as such. They do not appear to have terrified him, at all. And Gabriel seems to have always come for comfort and consolation. But the one Matthew mentions, at the sepulchre, frightened the Roman legionaries—men not easily alarmed—almost out of their lives. Each angel acts as if he had a distinct personality of his own. Why shouldn’t he? What reason is there to doubt that each is as absolutely himself, with all his peculiarities, as Wesley compared with Luther, or Washington with Lincoln?”

“But,” said I, “among men here, the great differences are due, I suppose, to heredity and to national traits.”

“Yes,” replied Sybil, “and no one knows what separate nationalities there may be among the angels. Anyway, if God created them, He adhered, we may be sure, to no one monotonous type of creature. That would not be like Him.

“But what an acquaintance, a friend, would

each one of these lords of immortality be! So transcendent in his being and powers—yet so gentle and meek and tender in his love! Think of learning from him when, where and how he came into existence, and what experiences he has had through the centuries! Gabriel was the same being, of course, when he brought the heavenly errand to Daniel (viii. 16, ix. 21) as when he came to Zechariah and to Mary (Luke i. 19, 26) six hundred years later. Then, what studies must our angel-friend have pursued? What views does he hold? Being finite and limited in knowledge, he must have, at various points, different views from his brethren. He must see truth from his own point, and under the phases of it that appear to him. What exhaustless sources of interest in all this! And, if there are millions in the angelic races, what a vista opens to us in that!”

“Yes,” said George, who had been enjoying the view below us, through his field-glass, but had now turned, with deepening interest, toward Sybil, “and another source of instruction and happiness, there, far transcends even this. It occurred to me the other day, as I was thinking how my father used to tell us children of his own boyhood, of his old home and school and friends, and where he went and what he did. There was a sort of weird charm about it, as I tried, with my

boyish fancy, to crowd down his portly presence into the roundabout and broad collar of a youngster like me.

“But what I was coming to, what all this suggested, is something quite different. As I thought of father’s loving way of unfolding to us his earlier life, the query arose, what if he should prove to be, in this, as at so many other points, a type of the Infinite Father! What if *He* should disclose, for our wonder and instruction and delight, the interminable past of his existence! The *biography of God*—the self-existent Jehovah, who never began to be—what must it not involve! Life implies activity—infinite life, a boundless activity. Reverently we may ask—and some time receive an answer—*What has He been doing* through those measureless ages? What worlds has he created?—with what inhabitants? God is love. And His benevolence, demanding intelligent, moral creatures on whom to expend its blessings, would call them into existence. It is sometimes asked, you know, what we could find to occupy us, that eternity would not exhaust. Here opens one employment, of which, if every world of the universe had been explored, we could nevermore reach the end.”

George’s thought had so seemed to loom up in its greatness, that we fell, for a while, into a silence

—little disposed to talk. A kind of solemn awe—yet rich in peace and happiness—stole over us, as the descending sun behind began to throw eastward the broad, deep shadow of old Sassacus. The thought of so transcendent joys brought to me, daring to expect them, a sombre sense of unworthiness. And, as we came down the pathway home, three stanzas of Hillhouse's wonderful hymn kept chanting themselves within me:

“ Earth has a joy unknown in heaven,
The new-born joy of sins forgiven!
Tears of such pure and deep delight,
Ye angels! never dimmed your sight.

“ Ye saw, of old, on chaos rise
The beauteous pillars of the skies;
Ye know where morn exulting springs,
And evening folds her drooping wings.

“ But I amid your choirs shall shine,
And all your knowledge shall be mine;
Ye on your harps must lean to hear
A secret chord that mine will bear !”

THE END.,

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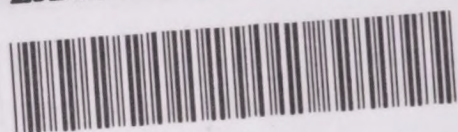
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